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OR

THE MEDIATORIAL DOMINION

OF

JESUS CHRIST.

BY

WILLIAM SYMINGTON, D. D.

AUTHOR OF A TREATISE ON THE ATONEMENT AND INTERCESSION OF CHRIST, &c. &c.

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TO THE

REVEREND ANDREW SYMINGTON, D.D.

Professor of Divinity,

IN

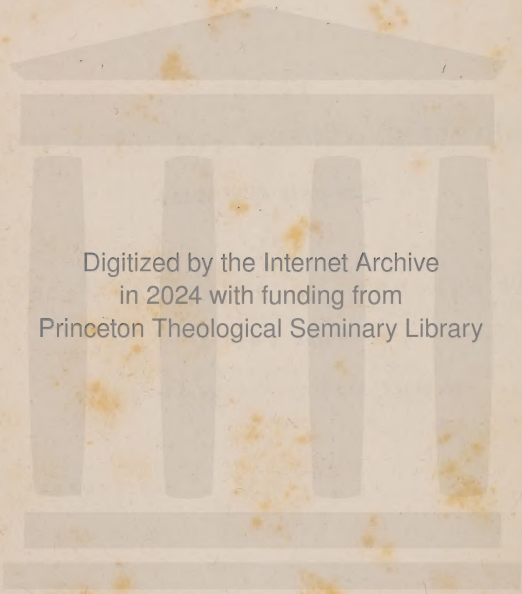
THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

This Volume

IS MOST AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY

HIS BROTHER.



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PREFACE.

The present may be regarded as a sequel to the work on the Atonement and Intercession of Christ, published by the author some few years ago. The subjects, as will be seen from the introductory pages of this volume, have an intimate connexion with each other. The glory of the divine Redeemer is deeply involved in both. The writer is not aware of the existence of any work, on the exact plan of that now offered to the public. It has been his object, to present a condensed, yet compehensive view, of the nature, properties, extent and duration, of the kingdom of the Messiah.

Two departments,—the church and the nations,—have received a large share of attention. But their paramount importance, apart from other considerations, is sufficient to account for this, and to render any apology unnecessary. In adverting, as was unavoidable in the discussion of these topics, to questions that are keenly agitated at the present time, the author has studied to keep clear of all allusion to matters, purely of a party nature, which have been unhappily mingled up with the discussion of a great and vital principle. Having no party purpose whatever to serve, he hopes he may have been enabled to escape, in some considerable degree at

least, that bitterness of feeling, and obliquity of judgment, which the spirit of party naturally engenders. It is one of the painful and unhappy results of controversy, especially when it happens to involve points in which the immediate interests of the respective parties are supposed to be concerned, that it is almost sure, so to pervert the mind, and awaken animosities, as to be greatly unfavourable to the detection and establishment of truth.

The author commits his work to the candid judgment of all who love that Redeemer, whose princely glory he has attempted to delineate; and to the promised blessing of the Spirit of Christ, who can give efficacy to the feeblest of human efforts.

W. S.

STRANRAER,
Jan. 7th, 1839.

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CHAPTER I.

NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL DOMINION.

It was deemed essential to the sa'vation of men that their Redeemer should possess the powers at once of a prophet, a priest, and a king. These offices, while essentially distinct, are necessarily and inseparably connected with one another. Such a union has been by some utterly denied; and its denial has laid the foundation for some capital errors, which have exerted a pernicious influence on the Christian church. By others it has been criminally overlooked; and the neglect with which it has been treated has occasioned vague and conflicting conceptions, regarding the great work of man's deliverance from sin and wrath by the mediation of the Son of God. The question of Paul, *Is Christ divided?* is one to which professing Christians have not given sufficient heed, and the evil consequences are abundantly apparent.

If, as we presume will be readily admitted, the whole of Christ's offices are necessary to the salvation of fallen man, it follows that they are all essential to the character of the Saviour, and that, of course, we cannot suppose him to have existed for a moment without any one of them, as this would suppose him to have been, for the time at least, no Saviour. This fearful result might itself be deemed sufficient to put Christians on their guard against fancying, either that Christ was invested with his different offices at different times, or that he acts at one time according to one and at another time according to another. From the very first, he must have possessed the powers of all his offices; and in every part of his work, they must all have come into operation. For example when he taught his disciples, he acted not only as a prophet, but also as a priest and a king; inasmuch as the doctrine which he taught brought fully to view his sacerdotal character, and the authority with which his instructions were enforced distinctly recognized his regal power. Again, when as a priest he offered himself a spotless sacri-

fice to God, he gave to the world as a prophet a new revelation of the character of God and of the principles of the divine moral government at the same time that as a king he triumphed gloriously over his enemies. In like manner his royal achievements not only manifest his majesty and his power, but serve to publish the clemency of his grace, and to recognize the merit of his atoning sacrifice as the ground on which they proceed.

This doctrine of inseparable union does not, by any means confound the distinction subsisting between the various offices of our Mediator, any more than the union of persons in the Godhead amounts to a denial of the essential distinction between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; or than the union of natures in the person of the Son of God is at variance with the ascription by the inspired writers, of some things to the one nature, and of other things to the other nature. Without confounding the distinction between them, we may, therefore, safely maintain the inseparable union of Christ's mediatorial offices—a union which obtained in every pain he endured, and in every act he performed or will ever perform in behalf of the elect; and which it becomes the believer joyfully and gratefully to recognize and acknowledge, as the absence of any one of them would disqualify him for performing the work of our redemption.

In proceeding to consider the MEDIATORIAL DOMINION, it is therefore to be borne in mind that it stands in inseparable connection with the sacerdotal offering of Christ. He sits *a Priest upon his throne*. Nor will any enlightened, unprejudiced subject of Zion's King feel that there is any incongruity, in his case at least, between the mitre and the crown, the altar and the throne, the censer and the sceptre, the smoking incense and the shout of victory. 'We have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens. This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sin, forever sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.'*

The mediatorial dominion forms a most interesting part of the Christian system, and as such both merits and requires extensive illustration. We may judge of the importance of this subject, from the frequency with which Christ is spoken

* Heb. iv. 14; x. 12, 13

of in the sacred writings, under the character of a King. This frequency is truly remarkable, and cannot fail to convey the impression that it is designed to be instructive. Is the advent of Messiah announced to the Christian Church? It is in these words:—'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy KING cometh unto thee.' * Are the members of the church invited to behold his excellences? Such is the character in which he is discovered:—'Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold KING Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.'† Is a gracious discovery of the Saviour promised? It is thus conveyed:—'Thine eyes shall see the KING in his beauty.' ‡ Are the saints required to exhult in the Redeemer? The requisition is in these terms:—'Let the children of Zion be joyful in their KING. ‖ Does the believer record the effect produced by some singular manifestation of the divine presence to his soul? This is the language:—'Wo is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the KING, the Lord of hosts.' § Or is the church required to celebrate the ascencion of her Lord? In strains, borrowed from the triumphant entrance of an earthly monarch into the capital of his kingdom, she exclaims:—'Lift up your heads, O ye gates: and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors: and the KING of glory shall come in.'¶ Such being the frequent allusion made in the scriptures to this particular feature of the Saviour's character, an examination into the mediatorial government of Christ presents peculiar attractions to every true disciple of Jesus; and as the theme is ample as well as inviting, it requires the patient, candid, and believing attention of all who would be wise unto salvation.

The DOMINION of Christ is his sovereign authority, the unlimited power he possesses over the creatures of his hand. It may be viewed as either *necessary*, or *official*. It is necessary, inherent, and underived, viewing him as *God;* it is official and delegated, viewing him as *Mediator*. It is in the latter of these lights we are now to contemplate it.

* Zech. ix. 9. † Song iii. 11. ‡ Is. xxxiii. 17.
‖ Ps. cxlix. 2. § Is. vi. 5. ¶ Ps. xxiv. 7.

What we are now to make the subject of inquiry is, the MEDIATORIAL DOMINION; not that which essentially belongs to him as God, but that with which he has been officially invested as the Messiah, by the authoritative act of the Father. It is that government, in short, which was *laid* upon his shoulders—that power which was *given* unto him in heaven and in earth.

In proceeding to the consideration of this interesting and momentous subject, the first thing which claims attention is the *necessity* of Christ's mediatorial rule. This takes precedence of all other points, inasmuch as its establishment will not only supply a valid presumption in favour of its reality, but also tend to prepare for the more careful investigation of the other parts of the subject, by impressing the mind with a still higher sense of its vast importance. *For he* MUST *reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.*

The mediatorial dominion of Christ is necessary to the *fulfilment of God's gracious purposes* respecting the elect. True, as has just been hinted, the right of dominion over all things necessarily belongs to him as God essentially considered. He has a right to make and manage all things as he pleases. He manages all the departments of his extensive empire in the most proper and efficient manner; the material and the moral worlds being each regulated by laws appropriated to itself. Had these been the whole—had this kingdom embraced no other department, there would have been no room, because no need, for the mediatorial rule, all the purposes of his government being perfectly subserved by his essential control as God. But there is something else than the material and moral world, generally considered, under the government of the Almighty. Man, having broken the original moral constitution under which he was placed, and become liable, in consequence, to the judicial displeasure and punishment of God, and God having determined, in the exercise of a gracious sovereignty, to rescue a number of the human family from the fearful consequences of such a state, that this might be done at once honourably and successfully, it became necessary that the government of these at least, and of others on their account, should be committed to him who was chosen to be their Saviour. On reflection, it must appear clear, that God, from the very perfection of his nature, could not, in his absolute character, deal with rebel sinners in any way with a view to their salvation. In

this character, he must seek their punishment, for he is just; and not only could he not *procure* pardon and deliverance from the curse of the broken covenant, or *offer* such pardon to those who had brought themselves under the curse, but he could not even *bestow* pardon, he could not actually deliver them, or conduct them to any of the blessings of salvation. Hence the necessity of another being appointed, not only to purchase and to offer redemption through his blood, but to apply it, to give it effect, to bestow the benefits of grace on the destined subjects of salvation. Hence springs the necessity of some such arrangement as that which is supposed in the mediatorial dominion—an arrangement indispensable to God's fulfilling his purposes of mercy, without offering violence to his judicial character.

Indeed, to *complete the mediatory character itself*, such dominion seems requisite. Jesus, the chosen of God, on whom he has laid our help, is of course a perfect Saviour. This we must not, cannot doubt. But this he could not be, without being invested with regal dignity and power. The work given him to do, supposes that he is so invested. It is SALVATION; and what is this? It is not merely, as we are apt to suppose, paying a ransom-price, by which the claims of the divine moral government shall be satisfied; it is not merely making an announcement that such satisfaction has been given and accepted, and offering redemption to the guilty on this ground. These are certainly important and essential parts of salvation; nor would we be understood as wishing to disparage either the one or the other. No: we can never enough appreciate or extol them. Still they are not sufficient, in themselves to constitute salvation; if there were nothing more, not a single sinner could ever have been saved. The ransom must be applied as well as purchased; the offer must be not only made, but accepted; and to secure this the Mediator must be invested with dominion.

It may here be remarked, that each office of Christ has its own peculiar province, in which it is essential and indispensable. The province of a priest, is to purchase; of a prophet, to publish; of a king, to apply. The first procures; the second makes known; the third gives effect. No one of these is more important or essential than another: they are all alike essential; not one of them can be dispensed with. The regal office can as easily be supposed to supersede the sacerdotal or the prophetical, as the sacerdotal or the prophetical

can be supposed to supersede the regal. It were absurd, indeed, to talk of applying what had not been procured; but not less so to talk of purchase without application. Such is the intimate connection subsisting between the respective mediatorial offices of our Redeemer; they go hand in hand; they are like the links of a chain; one does not supersede or enable us to dispense with another.

Let us, for the sake of illustrating and confirming the point under discussion, try what consequences would follow from supposing government or dominion to be expunged from the mediatorial functions of Christ. As priest, he makes atonement for the sins of the chosen of God, procures pardon, purchases deliverance from condemnation, pays the ransom due for their sins, and completely removes all legal obstructions to their salvation. As intercessor, he represents the case of his people before the Father, pleads the merits of his sacrifice, and expresses his will that they be put in possession of the purchased benefits of redemption; and the Father is pleased to hear and sustain the validity of his claims. As prophet, he makes known to men that all this has been done, acquaints them plainly that the curse of the law has been removed, God reconciled, and heaven opened for their reception. Yet will these avail for the salvation of a single soul? All this may be conceived to be done, and yet not one sinner rescued from the pit, not one rebel restored to the favour of the Almighty, not one child of Adam exalted to glory. Without something more the benefit arising from these interpositions is lost; without another office, the functions of these two are neutralized. Without regal authority, the sacrifice, however meritorious, has no power; the intercession, however powerful, has no efficacy; the doctrine, however clear, has no saving influence; and the son of God must be content to see the whole human race perish forever in their sins, as if his blood had never been either shed on Calvary, or carried within the veil. Such being the case, we can appreciate the import of the answer returned by the Saviour to the question of Pilate—'Art thou a king then? Thou sayest that I am a king. *To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world.*' *

This view of the connection subsisting between all the offices of Christ in general, and of the necessity of the kingly

* John. xviii. 37.

office in particular to the perfection of the other, agrees well with the account given in scripture of the work of the Messiah. The purchase of redemption made, the ransom for sin paid, the decease at Jerusalem accomplished, what step does he take next? Does he surrender all farther concern in the salvation of men? Does he abandon all mediatorial actings, and retire into the bosom of the Father? No. Follow him in his ascension to heaven; see him pressing forward into the presence of God and presenting his petition, 'Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.' Ere it is asked it is granted. This is the address with which he is saluted as he enters the heavenly places not made with hands:—'Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.' As if he had said to him—Thou hast established thy right to that rebel world: I surrender the government of it into thy hands: go through it and find out thy redeemed: gather them from the four winds of heaven: for this purpose institute ordinances, promulge laws, issue commands, appoint servants, subordinate whatever exists to the gracious and magnificent ends of thine appointment. And what is the result? Why, the mitre becomes a crown; the censer a sceptre; the Mediator passes from the altar to the throne; heaven becomes at once a temple and a palace, while its walls echo with the loud acclaim of welcome to the newly inaugurated monarch, which bursts spontaneously from the whole celestial host.

The kingly dignity of the Mediator is necessary, even *as a reward of his obedience unto the death.* Never was service so meritorious, whether we consider the sacrifice made or the end contemplated. In estimating the sacrifice made in performing this service, we must remember that the Son of God left the bosom of his heavenly Father, the region of uncreated light, and all the attractions of celestial society; that he eclipsed the essential splendour of his perfections, and assumed the likeness of sinful flesh; that he tabernacled with men on the earth, and there submitted to poverty, reproach, and pain; that he endured the persecution of men and devils, and suffered the most awful and mysterious agony, springing from the hiding of his Father's countenance. Then, the end contemplated was nothing less than this:—that men might be saved from everlasting destruction, made fit for heaven, reinstated in the society of angels and of one another, and restored to the favour of God. When or where

was there ever service to compare with that of Christ? Who ever delivered from misery so profound? Who ever exalted to bliss so dignified? Who ever made sacrifices so self-denied, in order to accomplish a benevolent undertaking? Many noble examples of disinterested philanthropy, to be sure, are on record; but before that of which we now speak, they must, one and all, hide their diminished heads. Here is merit transcendent, overwhelming, which beggars description, and sets comparison at defiance.

Now, should not such service be rewarded? Every principle of moral rectitude says that it should. '*Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory.*' This is not more a maxim of inspiration than a dictate of right moral feeling; and with this the stipulations of the eternal covenant, inspired predictions, the testimony of the Mediator himself, and the assertions of his apostles, all cordially harmonize.

But in what shall this merited reward consist? Not merely in the satisfaction of his own bosom, and the approbation of his heavenly Father. These are great, indeed, but they are not enough. They are inward, and, however fit to be appreciated by the Saviour himself, inadequate for giving expression to others of a sense of the value of his work. There must be something substantial, visible, outwardly glorifying, in the mediatorial reward; something to attract the notice, and call forth the applause of men and angels. Regal exaltation, absolute and unlimited, meets exactly the requirements of the case. If those among men, who have been faithful over a few things, are to be rewarded by being made 'rulers over many things,' surely it is due to him who, 'as a Son, has been faithful, like Moses, over all his house,' that he be made 'ruler over all.' Having, as a part of his humiliation, suffered himself to be made subject to rulers, to be placed at their bar, to be judged by their laws, to be counted worthy of death by their unrighteous decree, it is fitting that, in reward of what he has effected, he should be invested with sovereign rule over the princes of this world, and, in his turn, demand of them obedience to his authority, punish them for their proud and obstinate rebellion, and subordinate all their measures and movements to the gracious purposes of his reign. Thus, supposing no necessity to arise from either the purposes of God or the perfection of the mediatorial character, the work of Christ

would still demand to be rewarded by his being invested with official dominion.

Nor is this dominion less requisite *to counteract the opposition made to the work of man's salvation by its enemies.* 'For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.' That a work of such grace and benevolence as that of man's salvation, should provoke hostility, seems strange; but it is not more strange than true. It has many enemies: enemies to its internal operations in the heart; and enemies to its outward administration in the world. Against those internal operations in the heart which salvation supposes, there rise up a host of adversaries. The law, as a covenant of works, by demanding the punishment of the guilty violator, slays the peace of the soul. In-dwelling corruptions wage incessant warfare against the quickening, sanctifying, and comforting work of the Spirit. 'I find then a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me.' Satan and his emissaries, numerous, subtle, and powerful, assail by their temptations, accusations, and persecutions. 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.' The world, with its allurements and terrors, its smiles and frowns, tries to undermine the principles of stability. 'Because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.' Death, by threatening to execute the curse of the broken covenant, awakens slavish fears, deprives of tranquillity, and holds in ignoble and distracting bondage; while the grave threatens to hold the body in corruption, and then to engulf in final ruin both soul and body forever. 'And deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.'—In opposition to the outward administration of the work of Christ in the world, also, a whole host of enemies stand forth. There, wilful ignorance, unblushing infidelity, hardened profanity, open idolatry, Mohammedan delusion, Jewish obstinacy, anti-christian domination, and civil misrule, form a combined phalanx of portentous breadth and depth; an unholy alliance of discordant materials, breathing only one spirit of determined enmity to the reign of Christ in the world, and resolved to prevent the progress, and, if possible, to effect the extermination of his kingdom, by every means in their power.

Are these enemies to meet with no resistance? Is the

kingdom of the Messiah to fall a prey to their rapacious hatred, and that of his great arch-enemy to be erected on its ruins? Certainly not. It is the prayer of every saint that they may meet with a signal defeat. The honour of the Saviour himself demands their final overthrow; and the word of God assures us that such shall be the ultimate issue of the contest. By whom is this end to be brought about, but by the Messiah himself? 'My sword,' says he, 'shall be bathed in heaven: behold it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood; it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.' 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.*

To the accomplishment of this work, investment with regal power and authority is indispensable. In this capacity it is that Jesus encounters his enemies. It is not on the *white* horse merely, but on the *red*, the *black*, and the *pale*, that he goes forth conquering and to conquer, and bearing back with him from the field of battle the palm of victory. Nor is there anything in this at variance with his general character as Mediator. The saviour of his people, and the conqueror of their foes, are not incompatible features. They meet in the same character among men as well as in that of Christ. The prosperity of the people of God is intimately connected with the destruction of their enemies. These things go necessarily hand in hand. At the deluge, the preservation of the true seed, and the destruction of those who had corrupted their ways, were inseparably conjoined. The rescue of the Israelites from Egypt stood connected with

* Is. xxxiv. 5, 6; lxiii. 1—4.

the overthrow of the Egyptians; and when the Jews were restored from Babylon, their Chaldean oppressors were spoiled.

The mediatorial dominion, for which we are now contending, is not less necessary *to meet the needy circumstances of his own people.* They are all of them, by nature, rebels, enemies to Christ, both in their minds and by wicked works; their bosoms rankle with every hostile feeling; the carnal mind is enmity against God, and by nature all are carnal, sold under sin. It is not possible, such being the case, that they should embrace of themselves the overture of reconciliation, accept without hesitation the offers of mercy, and acquiesce with cordiality and esteem in the terms of salvation. No: they treat them with despite, and spurn them away from them with scorn. They must *be* reconciled—they must be *made* willing—their imaginations must be *brought* down. And how but by the Saviour's rod of omnipotent strength sent forth out of Zion; by the irresistible sceptre of his grace, swayed by authority for this very end; by the sharp arrows of conviction which penetrate the heart of the King's enemies only when propelled by Him whose right hand teaches terrible things, and who, in regal majesty, rides prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness! They are all by nature guilty, and stand in need of pardon. But to dispense forgiveness is a royal prerogative, which Christ could never have exercised had he not been a king. They are naturally unruly, and need to be governed; nor can they frame or execute laws for themselves. The Lord is their lawgiver; and to promulge laws, to enact statutes, belong only to one invested with regal dignity. They are, moreover, weak and defenceless. Exposed to the combined opposition of the enemies formerly specified, they have, in themselves, no ability to withstand either their artifices or their strength. That he may not only restrain and conquer all their enemies, but rule and defend themselves from the assaults to which they are exposed, he must hold the office of a king.

Such is the varied necessity that exists for the mediatorial dominion. The review of the several points by which it is established, may serve to strengthen our conviction of the importance attaching to this feature of the character of our Redeemer. Without it, it seems, the gracious purposes of God could not be executed; the mediatorial character

itself would not be complete; the work of salvation must continue unrewarded; the enemies of truth and holiness should finally triumph, and the necessities of the children of God remain forever unsupplied. Such things can not—must not—shall not be. 'The Lord is our king, and he will save us.' The exalted Redeemer is at once 'a Prince and a Saviour.'

CHAPTER II.

REALITY OF CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL DOMINION.

That Christ, besides the dominion which belongs to him originally and essentially as God, is invested with a delegated and official dominion as Mediator, is capable of being established by a variety of cogent proof. The necessity of such dominion to the work of salvation, established in the preceding chapter, itself constitutes an argument of some weight on this point. But other evidence, independent of this, is at hand, to which we now solicit attention.

Long before the period of his advent in the flesh, there were given *prefigurations* of this feature of the Saviour's character. Whether all the kings of Israel and Judah are to be regarded as express types of Messiah the Prince or not, it cannot be questioned that some at least of these ancient monarchs are to be looked upon in this light. There can be no doubt that this was the case with Melchizedek. That he was a type of Christ, is affirmed:—'Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.* The points of accordance are many and striking. The very name, which signifies 'king of righteousness,'† points directly to Him who, righteous in himself, wrought out for his people a justifying righteousness, works a sanctifying righteousness within them by his Spirit, and sways them with a sceptre of righteousness. His designation 'king of Salem,' that is 'king of peace,' fitly enough points out one who, whether as regards the disposition for which he was distinguished, the blessing he died to procure, or the effects of his administration, is well entitled to be called 'the Prince of peace.' What he did, in bringing forth bread and wine to Abraham and his army returning from the slaughter of the kings, is no unapt emblem of the spiritual nourishment and refreshment which the Messiah affords to his soldiers engaged in warfare with the enemies of their salvation. But the point

* Ps. cx. 4. † Heb. vii. 2.

which, most of all, marks him out as typical of our mediatorial king, is his combining in his own person the regal and sacerdotal offices. Besides being 'king of Salem,' he was 'priest of the most high God.' He was a royal priest—a sacerdotal king—and thus an eminent type of Him who, as exerting his power on the foot of his purchase, sits 'a priest upon his throne.'—Moses resembled Christ, not only in the facts of his personal history, and in his official acts as a Mediator in general, or Prophet in particular, but as 'king in Jeshurun.'* Jeshurun, which signifies *upright*, refers to the people of Israel, who were required, and understood, to possess this character. The Jewish legislator thus typified him who, being 'king in Zion,' at once rules among the upright in heart, and governs them with integrity and truth. And as Moses, in the capacity in question, gave his people laws, so Jesus has given *his* laws, not indeed of carnal ordinances, but of steadfast faith and inward spiritual obedience. David, too, to say nothing of the import of his name as the beloved, of his personal qualifications, and of his sufferings, cannot fail to strike every one at all acquainted with his history, as a remarkable type of Christ, in the auspicious commencement of his power in the signal overthrow of the vaunting champion of the Philistines; in his valour in war, and his wisdom and humanity in peace; in the principles and character of his administration, in which he led his people according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them by the skilfulness of his hands; and in the covenant of royalty made with him and his seed forever. So close is the resemblance, that the Messiah himself is more than once spoken of by the prophets, under the very name of David.† But by none was the mediatorial dominion more strongly pointed out than by Solomon. In the wisdom of his administration—the extent of territory over which he reigned—the wealth of his subjects—and the peacefulness of his reign, he was a remarkable type of the Messiah; so much so, that in that mystic epithalomium in which the Saviour's excellencies and love are fully set forth, this is the very name by which he is designated: 'Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon, with the crown

* Deut. xxxiii. 5.
† Jer. xxx. 9; Ezek. xxxiv. 34; Hos. iii. 5.

wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart.'*

Prophecy, as well as type, bore testimony to this view of the Saviour's character. The very first prediction is conceived in terms which allude to the ancient mode by which victorious kings expressed their conquest, namely, by placing their feet on the necks of their foes.† When the dying patriarch foretold that the 'sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come,'‡ his language clearly enough imports, that on Him, at his coming, should devolve that judicial and legislative authority which had been previously exercised by others. Balaam prophesied: 'There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a SCEPTRE (the emblem of regal power) shall rise out of Israel.'|| David said: 'Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion,'—a prediction which is expressly applied in the New Testament to Christ.§ The forty-fifth Psalm undoubtedly refers to the Messiah. The circumstances which it details were not verified in the history of Solomon's reign, besides being, many of them at least, inconsistent with the tenor of his private life, and at variance with the fortunes of his family. The titles by which the person spoken of is saluted, the multitudinous character of his progeny, and the perpetuity of his kingdom, all show that a greater than Solomon is here. Now, in this Psalm, the regal character is sustained throughout: 'I speak of the things which I have made touching the king. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.'¶ But time would fail to enumerate particularly all the prophecies bearing on this point, and we must content ourselves with referring to some others in the margin.**

Many of the *titles* which are applied to Christ in the scriptures, bear on this subject. He is designated LORD :—'God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both *Lord* and Christ.'—LEADER and COMMANDER :—'Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a *Leader* and *Commander* to the people.'—JUDGE :—'The Lord is our

* Song, iii. 11. † Gen. iii. 15. ‡ Gen. xlix. 10.
|| Num. xxiv. 17. § Ps. ii. 6; Acts, iv. 25, 26. ¶ Ps. xlv. 1, 3, 6.
** Ps. lxxii; lxxxix. 19—24; cx. 1—3; Is. ix. 6, 7; xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Ezek. xxxvii. 24; Zech. ix. 9, &c.

Judge.'—RULER :—'Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be *Ruler* in Israel.'*

The Saviour *laid claim himself* to this character. The passage in which this is related deserves particular attention. 'Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the king of the Jews? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, THOU SAYEST THAT I AM A KING. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth.'† It had been generally rumoured that Jesus was king of the Jews. The jealousy of the Roman government was excited. Pilate feels himself bound, from his office, to call him strictly to account on this point. Jesus, while he explains the sense in which his regal character was to be understood, does not deny the fact. On the contrary, he explicitly avows it. No sinister motive could induce him to decline acknowledging it. Nor does he content himself with a mere simple avowal; but he speaks of it as closely connected with the great purpose of his appearance in our world.

We find that *others* are not backward to recognize the validity of his claim. It is acknowledged by intelligent and moral beings of every class and rank. At the head of these, stands God the Father himself:—'Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.'—'God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.'‡ Next come angels, tuning their harps of gold to the praises of Zion's King:—'And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb,' said the angel to Mary, 'and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him THE THRONE of his father David: and he shall REIGN over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his KINGDOM there shall be no end.' 'And I heard the voice of many

* Acts ii. 36; Is. lv. 4; Is. xxxiii. 22; Mic. v. 2.
†John xviii. 33, 37. ‡ Ps. xxi. 3; Phil. ii. 9, 10.

angels,' says John, 'round about the throne, saying, worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive POWER, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.'* Then follow the saints, with notes less high, perhaps, but not less distinct or sincere. 'The star-led wizards' inquire for 'the heaven-born child,' in these words, 'Where is he that is born KING of the Jews?' while, as an act of lowly homage, they unfold their odoriferous treasures and lay them at his feet. Nathaniel witnessed this good confession:—'Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the KING of Israel.' And the apostle of the Gentiles, as he exhibits Jesus Christ 'for a pattern to them who should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting,' exclaims, 'Now unto the KING eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever, amen.† His enemies are reluctantly compelled to bring up the rear of witnesses to his royal claims. The Jewish multitude rent the air with their shouts, as he entered into Jerusalem, crying, 'Hosanna, blessed is the KING of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.' The Roman soldiers unwittingly bore their part, as they 'bowed the knee before him and mocked him, saying, Hail, KING of the Jews!' And Pontius Pilate must needs cause be put on his cross, written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, the unalterable title, 'JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS'—a title which was read, we may conclude, with profit by many of the multitude, and which was, perhaps, the principal means of conveying to the malefactor that knowledge of the Saviour's character which led to his conversion.‡

In harmony with all this evidence, is the circumstance that *royal appendages* are described as belonging to him. We say nothing here of his *kingdom*, as this shall fall to be afterwards fully described in its nature, extent, and duration. He wears royal *titles;* being spoken of, in addition to those specified above, by others still more specific and descriptive. As expressive of his being the inherent source, the meritorious author, and liberal bestower and supporter of spiritual and eternal being, he is called the 'PRINCE OF LIFE:'—to denote his dominion and authority, he is spoken of as 'KING OF SAINTS:'—and, as indicative of his absolute and universal

* Luke i. 31—33; Rev. v. 11, 12.
† Mat. ii. 2. John i. 49. Tim. i. 17.
‡ John xii. 13; Mat. xxvii. 29; John xix. 19.

supremacy, he is represented as having on his vesture and on his thigh the splendid inscription, 'KING OF KINGS, AND LORDS OF LORDS.'* He occupies a *throne*,—the seat of royalty, from which the king dispenses his laws, and on which he receives the homage of his subjects :—'Thy THRONE, O God, is for ever and ever. To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me on my THRONE.'† His head is adorned with a *crown* of purest radiance, surpassing in worth and beauty the most costly diadem ever worn by earthly monarch, though composed of the richest materials, and studded with the brightest gems that earth can furnish—its substance being true honour, and its jewels immortal souls. 'Thou settest a CROWN of purest gold on his head. Thou hast CROWNED him with glory and honour. Upon himself shall his CROWN flourish. They shall be mine in that day when I make up my JEWELS.'‡ He wields a *scepre* which is the rod of office, the symbol of regal authority, and the instrument by which the monarch at once gathers and governs his people, and smites and subdues his enemies. 'The SCEPTRE of thy kingdom is a right SCEPTRE. The Lord shall send the ROD of thy strength out of Zion. Thou shalt break them with a ROD of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.'‖ *Laws* are essential to dominion ; it cannot exist long without them ; and there can be no administration where they are entirely awanting. The Messiah is not without these ; the scriptures are the law of the Lord—a code of laws at once righteous, suitable, extensive, and efficacious : 'the law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good'—'being not without law to God, but under law to Christ.'§ Numerous and glorious are his *attendants*. At the giving of the law they are thus described :—'The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them : he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with TEN THOUSANDS OF SAINTS.' At his advent :—'Suddenly there was with the angels a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.' During his life :—'ANGELS came and ministered unto him.' At his ascension :—'The chariots of God

* Acts iii. 15; Rev. xv. 3; xvii. 14; xix. 16.
† Ps. xlv. 5, 6; Rev. iii. 21.
‡ Ps. xxi. 3; viii. 5; cxxxii. 18; Mal. iii. 16.
‖ Ps. xlv. 6; cx. 2; ii. 9. § Rom. vii. 12; 1 Cor. ix. 21.

are twenty thousand, even THOUSANDS OF ANGELS: the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive.' And, at his second coming, when the judgment shall be set and the books opened:—'THOUSANDS, THOUSANDS shall minister unto him, and TEN THOUSAND TIMES TEN THOUSAND stand before him. Behold the Lord cometh with TEN THOUSAND OF HIS SAINTS.'* Then, he has his *servants* and *ambassadors*. Of the elements, it is said:—'He maketh his MINISTERS a flaming fire.' Of the angelic tribes:—'Are they not all MINISTERING SPIRITS sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?' Of the ministers of religion:—'Now, then, we are AMBASSADORS for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God. Let a man so account of us as of the MINISTERS OF CHRIST.'† How shall we describe his *revenues*—the honour, and glory, and worship, and respect, and esteem, and constant obedience, which he exacts as tribute from all the subjects of his dominion? 'He is thy Lord, and worship thou him. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him all the earth.'‡ And all the royal prerogatives of apprehension and liberation, of condemnation and acquittal, of life and death, of pardon and execution, belong to him without reserve:—'I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.'‖ Such, if we may so speak, are the *regalia* of the mediator; his ensignia, of transcendent value and matchless splendour. There are no titles like his titles; no throne of such peerless majesty; no crown of such overpowering radiance; no sceptre of such resistless might; no laws so equitable or beneficent; no retinue so large or so illustrious; no ministers so dignified; no revenues so rich; no prerogatives so absolute as his! 'Who in the heaven can be compared to the Lord? who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto him?'

Of the reality of Christ's mediatorial dominion there can

* Deut. xxxiii. 2; Luke ii. 13, 14; Mat. iv. 11; Ps. lxviii. 17, 18; Dan. vii. 10; Jude 14.
† Ps. civ. 4; Heb. i. 14; 2 Cor. v. 20; 1 Cor. iv. 1.
‡ Ps. xlv. 11; xcvi. 8, 9. ‖ Deut. xxxii. 39.

thus be no doubt. Great must be the guilt of those who either deny or overlook it. To do so is to nullify types; to contradict prophecy; to blot out the Saviour's titles; to give the faithful and true Witness himself the lie; to convert his regalia into empty baubles; and to reduce his prerogatives to mere mockery and show. Let us beware, either by treating this dominion with carelessness, or by refusing to submit to it, of bringing on our heads such accumulated guilt. While we profess to recognize and acknowledge the Prince of life, let us not, by reducing our acknowledgment to an empty form, be guilty of re-acting the impious mockery of those who, in derision of his claims, platted a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and put on him a purple robe; and while they shouted, 'Hail, King!' smote him with their hands. Rather let us, by improving his dominion, place on his head the crown of our salvation, submit ourselves to be governed by his laws, and look forward to being elevated to sit with him on his throne of glory in the heavens.

CHAPTER III.

CHRIST'S QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEDIATORIAL DOMINION.

THE promise, 'Thine eyes shall see the king in his *beauty*,' is one of comprehensive import. Part of this beauty must consist in the official qualifications of the Redeemer. In his qualifications for the office of a king, there is all the beauty of moral fitness. Each sheds a ray of lustre on his official character in general, and all together exhibit a splendour of regal accomplishment quite unparralleled.

Personal dignity forms a primary and conspicuous feature in the regal qualifications of the Messiah. This, if not always deemed essential in a king, is generally regarded as fit and proper. This general sense of its propriety may be inferred from the ease with which men in every age have gone into the principle of hereditary government. A degree of personal dignity or natural majesty, either real or adventitious, seems essential to qualify for rule. That the reins of government should be placed in the hands of one entirely destitute of every thing of this nature, is repugnant to all our feelings of propriety. On this principle proceeded the answer to the question put by Gideon to Zebah and Zalmunna:—'What manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor? As thou art, so were they; each one resembled the children of a king.'* To the same purpose is the reflection of the wise man:—'Wo to thee, O land, when thy king is a child, and thy princes eat in the morning. Blessed art thou, O land, when thy king is the son of nobles!'† Now, great is the personal dignity of our mediatorial King. He is the SON OF GOD—a title by which he is designated times without number in the scriptures. Into the question, whether his sonship be personal or official, we cannot be expected fully to enter here. The remark we have made, however, proceeds on the supposition that it is *personal;* for,

* Judg. viii. 18. † Eccl. x. 16, 17.

if he were the Son of God only in an official or figurative sense, sonship could never be adduced as qualifying for the very office from which it derived its own existence. Sonship cannot possibly be derived from, and qualify for, office, at the same time. But that the title in question may safely be viewed as denoting personal dignity, as involving something supernatural or divine, as implying a constructive assumption of such dignity as belongs only to God, would seem to be borne out by the circumstance, that his assuming this title was considered, by the highest legal and ecclesiastical authorities of the Jews, as sufficient to expose him to the charge of blasphemy, because by doing so he thus made himself equal with God;—an inference which he never once attempted to deny, while he vindicated himself from the imputation which it was falsely understood to involve. 'Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.'* The Sonship and office of Christ are also frequently spoken of as different; they are often set in opposition to one another, and even introduced as distinct parts of the same simple propositions; as, for example, when it is said, 'He preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God'—'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'† Besides, official sonship is a common thing, but that of Christ is spoken of as peculiar and exclusive; whence he is called God's 'own Son,' and his 'only begotten Son'—language expressive of a relation supreme in dignity, unique in nature, without a parallel, absolutely his own.‡ These considerations, along with the fact that his sonship is represented as prior to and dignifying his office, fully warrants us, we conceive in speaking of him, as qualified for mediatorial dominion by his personal dignity as the Son of God. Indeed, this view of the matter is very impressively set before us in the words of the angel to Mary:—'He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David'||—plainly referring to the honour which his regal character receives from his personal dignity. How admirably does this qualify him for his regal office? If the land is pronounced blessed whose king is 'the son of

* John v. 18. † Acts ix. 20; viii. 37.
‡ John i. 14; Rom. viii. 32. || Luke i. 32.

nobles,' how greatly blessed must that kingdom be whose ruler is the 'Son of God!'

The personal dignity, however, is not, in this case, such as to prevent a *near relationship* to the subjects of his spiritual kingdom. 'Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose: one from *among thy brethren* shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, who is not thy brother.'* Such was the ancient law respecting the appointment of the supreme ruler among the Jews. It was founded in reason and in accurate views of human nature, as only one who was related by natural ties could enter fully into the feelings of the people, participate in all their troubles, and sympathize with them in all their joys and sorrows. Both nature and reason revolt at the idea of a man ruling over angels, or of an angel ruling over men; and it is the same general principle which dictates the impolicy and impropriety of appointing a foreigner to the supreme government of a nation.

To qualify him for ruling over man, it would thus appear to be necessary that Christ should possess human nature. The height of his personal dignity as the Son of God, seems to preclude the possibility of this natural relationship to his subjects. By the mystery of the incarnation, however, this difficulty is overcome. A human nature, miraculously provided by the power of the Holy Ghost, was by a voluntary act of assumption on the part of the Son of God, taken into near, uncompounded, and indissoluble union with his person: in consequence of which the Son of God became also the Son of man. The Word was made flesh. He who, as God, was removed far above every thing human, was, as man, qualified for exercising all the tender sympathies of humanity; and, thus touched with the feeling of our infirmities, was fitted for ruling in the hearts of his people with all the sensibilities of a brother. It is interesting to observe in this connection, that when his incarnation was announced by the angel, he was led to speak of him in his regal character, which seems to favour the idea that the one was regarded as a qualification for the other. 'Thou shalt bring forth a son, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever.'† Although we can conceive of

* Deut. xvii. 15. † Luke i. 31, 21.

him reigning without this, in virtue simply of his divine supremacy, it is impossible to overlook the condescending kindness that has been shown to the state of man, in providing for us a Saviour having the bowels of human compassion. His personal dignity is not in this way lessened; the lustre of his divine majesty is not diminished. But there is something superadded which gives us greater boldness to approach; and when we come to our King with perfect freedom, pressing our suit with eagerness, and expressing our confidence that the petition we present shall be granted, were we questioned as to what it is that gives us all this ease, we might deem it sufficient to reply in the words of the men of Judah to the men of Israel of old—*Because the king is near of kin to us.**

Jesus is farther qualified for mediatorial dominion, by his extensive *knowledge* and astonishing *wisdom*. These are indispensable regal qualifications. That authority of any kind, particularly supreme authority, should be held by one who is ignorant or foolish, shocks all our sentiments of propriety. 'Be *wise*, O ye kings.' The kings of Israel were required to read in the book of the law; and Solomon, the most distinguished king of antiquity, and one of the most remarkable types of Christ in his regal office, was wiser than all men of his day. We speak now, not so much of knowledge in general, as of that which qualifies for rule; knowledge of the principles of government; of the laws of the kingdom; of the character, state, and necessities of the subjects; and of the nature and bearing of foreign relations. Such knowledge is essential to the ussful exercise of power. The knowledge of Christ, in all these spects, is extensive and perfect. He knows well the principles of the government which he is delegated to administer; for they are founded on the nature of God and man, and on the relation subsisting between them; and with these, being Immanuel, God with us, he cannot but be most thoroughly acquainted. Well he knows the laws of his kingdom, being himself the lawgiver by whom they were all framed and promulgated, and having himself yielded perfect obedience to them all. He knows all his subjects, in the minute variety of their circumstances, characters, necessities, and desires; for 'he knows all things; he needs not

* 2 Sam. xix. 42.

that any should testify of man, for he knows what is in man, and he searcheth the reins and hearts.* Nor are the foreign relations of his kingdom less minutely known to him. He is thoroughly acquainted with the rival kingdom of this world, from which he has to reclaim his subjects, and against whose assaults he must defend his own; with the kingdgom of darkness, from which he has to save all who who are under his dominion; and with the kingdom of light, with which he is to induce them to form, not a partial or temporary confederacy merely, but a final and permanent alliance.

Nor is wisdom less important than knowledge. Judgment is necessary to enable us to make a right use of knowledge. Fewer err from ignorance than from indiscretion. Wisdom to foresee, judgment to contrive, prudence to execute, are essential to a ruler. Jesus, 'the king eternal,' is at the same time 'the only *wise* God.' His understanding is infinite. He foresees all that is connected with either the welfare or the injury of his kingdom; he can provide for both the one and the other; and he has sufficient skill as well as power to carry all his schemes of advancement and glory into full effect. He can lay down the best plans and devise the best measures for promoting at once the enlargement, the usefulness, and the happiness of his kingdom.

In short, nothing can fail, either from ignorance or from indiscretion. There is no lack of information or of prudence. No event can occur unforeseen; no movement of an enemy can take him by surprise; no change can take place among his subjects which is unprovided for. He is fully prepared for every occurrence. Nay, such is his wisdom, that what his enemies design for the injury of his kingdom, he can, by his skilful management, cause to operate powerfully for its good.

But all these qualities will be of no avail without *power*. Dignity to adorn, relationship to sympathise, and wisdom to project, will be of no use, unless there be also energy to execute. Uncontrollable power is one of the regal qualifications of Christ. 'Wisdom and *might* are his.' Force of mind, energy of character, and powerful resources are requisite in a king. Besides skill to plan for the good of his subjects,

* John xxi, 17; ii. 25. Rev. ii. 23.

he must have ministers, finances, armies, to enable him to realise his schemes. Jesus possesses all the resources of omnipotence. He is 'the mighty God,' 'the Lord which is, and which was, and which is to come—the Almighty.' Creation, providence, regeneration, and resurrection, proclaim the extent of physical and moral energy which he has at his command, in order to conduct the administration of his mediatorial kingdom. His ministers are qualified, by their numbers and endowments, to execute his sovereign pleasure. He can call to his aid all the perfections of Godhead, and all the fulness of the new covenant. The elements of heaven, the apostate spirits, and the angels of light, are all under his entire control, for advancing his cause and opposing his enemies. At his command, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera; a messenger of Satan was sent to buffet an apostle, in fulfilment of his gracious designs towards his servant; and it was no empty boast, that he could have commanded more than twelve legions of angels. With such vast power, such immense resources, no purpose can fail from inability to carry it into execution. Nor can any opposition, however great, withstand the weight of his omnipotent arm. He has a mighty arm; strong is his hand and high is his right hand. His people shall be willing in the day of his power. He is mighty to save. Where the word of this King is, there is power.

High *moral excellence* is another indispensable qualification. Without this, dignity can serve only as a passport to iniquity; relationship and knowledge can confer only greater capacity of mischief; wisdom must degenerate into low cunning; and power become mere physical force, more to be dreaded than the hurricane, the tempest, or the lightning. Rectitude of intention, justice of administration, and exemplary conduct, are the constituents of that moral excellence which scripture, reason, and common-sense, concur in demanding as necessary to qualify for conducting a proper and effective government. These elements of moral worth meet, in the highest degree and in perfect combination, in the character of Prince Messiah. 'The sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre—Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.' Rectitude of intention characterises all his plans. Every thing is designed for the good of his people and the glory of the godhead.

Other kings may have sinister ends to serve : even when doing what is right in itself, they may have an ultimate respect to their own personal aggrandizement, or to the advancement of some favourite courtier ; or, supposing them moved solely by a regard to the good of their subjects, they may be seeking this at the expense of some neighbouring state. No defect of this nature can ever exist in Him of whom we are speaking. He can have no intentions but what are benevolent and righteous ; nor can he, even for the fulfilment of these, ever overlook what is due to the honour and glory of God. His administration, too, is perfectly equitable. When the intentions of men are he best that can be supposed, the administration is not always such ; while, in other cases, both the intention and the administration are the reverse of just. The rights, and liberties, and property of the subjects, are too often sacrificed, by unprincipled rulers, to schemes of lawless ambition or iniquitous favouritism. The administration of Christ, on the contrary, is impartial, righteous, infallible, ; no one is wronged that another may be benefitted ; and every act is such as entitles it to meet with ready and implicit submission.

Exemplary behaviour is necessary to give due moral effect to official administration. Laws however wise, acts however equitable, intentions however pure, cannot have the same influence on others when they proceed from persons who are themselves destitute of moral character. No government, however good in itself, can be expected to be successful, which is administered by a known profligate or debauchee. It is wisely required that he that ruleth over men must be 'just, ruling in the fear of the Lord.' It were unreasonable to expect principles to be acted upon, and laws to be obeyed, which are inculcated by persons who are themselves violating them every day. He is likely to be most useful who can appeal, as Samuel did of old, to his people : 'I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold here I am ; witness against me before the Lord and before his anointed, whose ox have I taken ? or whose ass have I taken ? or whom have I defrauded ? whom have I oppressed ? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mineeyes herewith ? '* Jesus set his subjects

* 1 Sam. xii. 2, 3.

an example of perfect holiness. His conduct was unimpeachable; his behaviour was unaffected with the slightest moral obliquity. All the laws of his kingdom, whether personal, relative, or religious, were recommended by his example, as well as enforced by his sovereign authority. He is not only the righteous Lord who *loveth* righteousness, but he *practised* it so fully and so constantly, as to entitle him, in presence of his most inveterate enemies, to put forth the challenge: 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' Perfect moral excellence adorns his character, and qualifies him for mediatorial dominion.

Nor is Jesus deficient in the softer qualities of *meek compassion, tender mercy, and munificent bounty.* These also are important. Great wisdom and stern integrity may be combined with a harsh, repulsive, and unfeeling disposition, but such a combination can be regarded only in the light of a defect. '*Mercy* and truth preserve the king, and his throne is upholden by *mercy*.' * It is true, it may sometimes be necessary to assume an appearance of austerity and terror. The character of nations may be such, that, for the purpose of punishing them, the Almighty may see meet, like the Egyptians of old, to 'give them over to a cruel lord, to appoint a fierce king to rule over them;' but, generally speaking, mercy is one of the most efficient attributes, as well as brightest ornaments, of power. When it can be exercised in consistency with justice and safety, it sheds a softening lustre over authority. In the qualifications of Sion's King, the combination in question is complete. In him, justice and compassion are quite compatible. 'Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.' While 'he loves righteousness and hates wickedness,' all 'his garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia.' To the daughter of Sion, her King is announced at once as '*just* and having salvation, *lowly* and riding upon an ass, upon a colt the foal of an ass. He can have compassion upon the ignorant and them that are out of the way. Although having all the resources of destruction at his command, he bears patiently with the disobedience and rebellious insults of his subjects. He waits to be gracious. To the most worthless criminal he extends the golden sceptre of his love. His

* Prov. xx. 28.

munificence is exhaustless; his bestowments most bountiful and liberal. Plenty, liberty, honour, are dispensed with open hand. What shall be done to the man whom this King delights to honour, cannot be told or conceived, 'He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor. He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass; as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the soul of the needy. *

In addition to the qualifications specified above, there must be undoubtedly *authority*. This is necessary to the valid exercise of power. A legal right to rule is essential. Without it there can be no claims to obedience; the acts of administration are nullified, and stamped with the iniquity of usurpation. Other qualifications cannot confer this; nor can the abundance in which they may be enjoyed make up for the want of it. There are two ways in which legitimate authority may be conveyed—divine appointment and popular choice. The latter, however just and proper among men, cannot obtain here; as it is one of the peculiarities of the case before us, that the king chooses the people, and not the people the king. 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.' Divine appointment, therefore, is here the proper source of authority. Not that his right to rule is not confirmed by purchase and by conquest; but these are not in themselves sufficient; in their very nature they pre-suppose the existence of an authority founded on the appointment of God. This, then, is the chief origin of that authority by which the Messiah is qualified for the exercise of mediatorial dominion. It is a matter of such importance, and admits of such amplitude of proof and illustration, that we shall devote a section to it by itself. 'The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.'

Behold, then, Messiah, the Prince, in the beauty of his regal qualifications. Personal dignity, near relationship, extensive knowledge, astonishing wisdom, uncontrollable

*Ps. lxxi. 4, 6, 7, 12, 13.

power, perfect moral excellence, the deepest tenderness, and undoubted authority, meet in his character. Each of these qualities possesses an attractive moral loveliness; and the whole together exhibit an admirable combination of excellencies which cannot but fit, in the highest possible degree, for that dominion which the Mediator exercises. Here, dignity and condescension, grace and majesty, are admirably blended. There is nothing redundant, nothing defective. There is nothing present that can be wanted, nothing awanting that can be needed, and every part is in due proportion and delightful harmony. The subjects of Christ's kingdom may well place all manner of reliance on the acts of his administration. They may be sure that all is holy, just, and good. They have no cause to despond, to find fault, or even to murmur; for his qualifications are such, as at once to assure them that what is past is the best that could have been done, and to hold out infallible security that what remains to be accomplished shall be fulfilled in the same perfect manner. How should this encourage the timid, animate the desponding, and stimulate all to receive and submit to him as their King and Lord!

CHAPTER IV.

APPOINTMENT OF CHRIST TO MEDIATORIAL DOMINION.

We have just said that the appointment of Christ to mediatorial rule is a topic of great importance, and deserving, on this account, of being fully investigated, clearly unfolded, and distinctly understood.

Now, we remark that Christ was *formally* appointed to the kingly office *by his Father from all eternity in the covenant of grace.* That he was appointed by the Father is affirmed distinctly. 'Yet have I SET my king upon my holy hill of Zion.—I appoint unto you a kingdom, as MY FATHER HATH APPOINTED UNTO ME.—As the Father hath life in himself, so hath HE GIVEN to the Son to have life in himself; and hath GIVEN HIM AUTHORITY to execute judgment also because he is the Son of man.'* It belonged to the Father to do this formally, as the representative of Deity in the economy of redemption; being placed at the head of this economy by the mutual consent of the adored Three, to sustain the authority and vindicate the honour of the Godhead. Absolutely speaking, Christ's appointment proceeded from the sovereign act of the divine will essentially considered. The designation of all the divine persons to their respective economical characters and offices, can only be referred to such an act. To conceive it as proceeding from the Father necessarily or originally, is at variance with the perfect *equality* subsisting among the divine persons themselves. It must, therefore, be viewed as flowing *absolutely from God essentially considered* in the first instance; and, then, that of the Son and the Holy Spirit as proceeding *formally from the Father*, in whom all power and authority have been economically vested for this end. From him, therefore, the for-

* Prov. ii. 6. Luke xxii. 29. John v. 26, 27.

mal appointment of the Mediator to government or rule must be ascribed. This formal appointment took place in the covenant of grace. The covenant of grace comprises the whole scheme agreed upon by the divine persons for the salvation of fallen man. Every thing belonging to this scheme, its nature, foundation, administration, and reward, is comprehended in this federal transaction; and, of course, the appointment or constitution of Christ's regal character must have been included. The character in which we are contemplating him is a covenant character. 'I have made a COVENANT with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant, thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy THRONE to all generations.'* This appointment took place from all eternity—before time began—in anticipation of the fall and consequent helplessness and danger of man. Hence, referring to this, after the announcement 'Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion,' it is added, 'I will declare the DECREE: the Lord hath said unto me, thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee.'† To the same purpose is the declaration—'I was set up FROM EVERLASTING, from the beginning, or ever the earth was:'‡ while he who was to be 'Ruler in Israel' was spoken of by Micah as having his 'goings forth from of old, from everlasting.'|| How sublime, solemn, and indubitable, this act of formal appointment!

Christ's appointment from eternity to the kingly office, was *significantly intimated, in the fulness of time, by the solemn unction of his human nature.* What took place in the everlasting covenant, but for this, should have remained to us a secret, unknown and profound. To our feeling an interest in and becoming acquainted with it, however, it was necessary that it should be revealed. This was effected by his being solemnly anointed in token of his designation. It was thus that kings were anciently set apart; anointing was the symbol of appointment. To anoint a king was the common language employed to denote regal designation. 'The trees went forth on a time *to anoint* a king over them.—The bramble said unto the trees, If in truth you *anoint* me king over you.—Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me *to anoint* thee to be

* Ps. lxxxix. 3, 4.
† Ps. ii. 6, 7.
‡ Ps. viii. 23.
|| Mic. v. 2.

king over his people, over Israel.—Thou shalt *anoint* unto me him whom I name unto thee. The house of Judah have *anointed* me king over them. *Anoint* Hazael to be king over Syria.'* Similar language is used respecting Christ: 'Yet have I set (Heb. *anointed*) my King upon my holy hill of Zion. God, thy God, hath *anointed* thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I *anointed* him. I have ordained a lamp for mine *anointed*. Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast *anointed*, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together—how God *anointed* Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, and with power.'† What idea was intended to be conveyed by this phraseology, the passages formerly quoted enable us to determine. There cannot be a doubt, that regal appointment is designed by the unction which Jesus is said to have received; an unction which consisted not, as in the case of kings among men, of literal oil and aromatic perfumes applied to the body by the hand of a prophet, but of the spirit of grace poured out upon him in rich abundance by the Father. This was the 'holy oil, the oil of gladness,' with which he was anointed 'above his fellows'—language, it may here be remarked by the way, which denotes the equity of his appointment, the happiness it was fitted to yield, and the superiority of his office, as well as the reality of his designation. These expressions may be interpreted, in part, as referring to his blessed qualifications; but they must be viewed principally as denoting his authoritive appointment, in respect of which, all his garments may be said to 'smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces.'

Christ's appointment was still farther displayed in his *actual investiture with regal power at and after his resurrection*. This might be called the inauguration solemnity of the mediatorial King. What took place in the counsels of eternity was made known in the fulness of time; but it was still more fully and clearly exhibited when the Son of God rose from the dead. Although the kingly office of Christ is essential to the mediatorial character, and, of course, must have existed from eternity, and must also have been exercised from the beginning of time, the scrip-

* Judg. ix. 8, 15; 1 Sam. xv. 1; xvi. 3; 2 Sam. ii. 7; 1 Kin. xix. 15.
† Ps. ii. 6; xlv. 7; lxxxix. 20; cxxxii. 17; Acts iv. 27; x. 38.

tures, nevertheless, speak of it as conferred upon him in reward of his obedience unto death. 'Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.* That it should have existed from the beginning, and that it should have been conferred at his resurrection, may seem inconsistent with one another. They are, however, both as true, and in the same way also, as that the Holy Spirit always existed in the church, and yet was not given until Christ was glorified. After Christ was glorified there was a more copious manifestation, a more full dispensation of the Spirit. And in the same manner, at his resurrection, there was a more ample display, a more extensive exercise of Christ's regal power. His power was, from the first, exercised on the footing of his meritorious death; for, although that death had not yet taken place, it was infallibly certain that it should; it was not possible that it should fail, and every kingly act might refer to it with as much safety as if it had already been fulfilled. But when the death had really occurred, it was natural and fitting that there should be a display of the power which resulted from it, and which had all along a regard to it. In short, the exercise of the mediatorial dominion *before*, and that *after*, his resurrection, bore much the same relation to one another, which the exercise of the kingly office among men before, and that after, the coronation of a king, do to one another. The ceremony of coronation makes a public, solemn, august display of the sovereign's investiture with regal power; but the power itself existed before; in an hereditary government, from the moment of the demise of his predecessor; in an elective government, from the time of his being chosen by the people. From the first moment of his accession to the crown, the official acts of the monarch possesses full validity; this is not suspended upon the right of coronation, which may not be performed for months or years, or which may even be omitted altogether. After coronation, however, there is a more formal and open recognition of the king's right

*Phil. ii. 8—10.

to exercise all royal functions, and of his claim to all royal privileges. Just thus was there, after the resurrection of our Redeemer from the grave, a more full, explicit, and impressive recognition of his appointment to mediatorial rule. Then did it appear that all power was given unto him in heaven and in earth. 'His being by the right hand of God exalted,' was the means of 'letting all the house of Israel know assuredly that God had made that same Jesus whom men had crucified both Lord and Christ.' 'When he raised him from the dead, he set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.' 'When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.' True, he was King from eternity; from the entrance of sin into our world he exercised the regal functions; in the lowest depths of his humiliation, occasional signs of dignity and power burst forth. But, not until his resurrection from the dead and ascension to the throne of the Father, was his investiture with this power publicly and formally recognized. Then, however, did his regal splendour come out from the cloud of obscurity in which it had been formerly wrapped; his diadem shone forth with transcendent lustre; his sceptre, the weight of which had before been comparatively unfelt, began now to be wielded with new power; angels sung his coronation anthem:—

'Ye gates, lift up your heads on high;
Ye doors that last for aye,
Be lifted up that so the King
Of glory enter may;'

And, amid the loud acclaim of these celestial attendants, he ascended his throne, and entered on the formal administration of his mediatorial kingdom. Behold him, rising from the dead, ascending to heaven, and sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and doubt, if you can, his full appointment to mediatorial rule and authority.

Nor is it undeserving of notice, that this appointment is *attested by many distinct and indubitable witnesses.* The Father bears formal proof to the fact, when he says, 'Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.' The Sa-

viour himself bears this testimony, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' The spirit of Old Testament prophecy declared, 'I beheld in the night-visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him, and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' Apostles, under the New Testament, concur in the evidence they furnish: 'God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.' And every creature in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, are heard saying, 'Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever.' Such united, harmonious, unequivocal testimonies, leave us no room to doubt the interesting fact, and render inexcusable every feeling of scepticism on the subject.

Yet, it is candidly acknowledged, that this matter is not without its difficulties.

The appointment and exaltation of Christ to the kingly office, have been represented, by Unitarians, as inconsistent with his divinity. They are supposed to imply inferiority. But the economical character of the Son explains this difficulty at once. It is not as God, absolutely considered, that either the one or the other takes place; but as Mediator. In this capacity it is easy to suppose him invested with authority; and, considering the deep humiliation to which he voluntarily submitted in this character, there can be no difficulty whatever in understanding either the fact or the nature of his exaltation.

Nor did he, in assuming the mediatorial dominion, divest himself of any thing belonging to him as God. This it were impiety to suppose. Deity is unchangeable. His being, perfections, character, and government, as God, remained the same as they ever were. They might be obscured in appearance, but they were the same in reality. His moral authority over all creatures could never be laid aside, as it is essential to his very being and character. The mode of its exercise only was changed: it was now

administered in an economical instead of an absolute character, for the good and salvation of his church.

Neither does the appointment of Christ to the regal office suppose that God is deprived of that necessary and essential dominion which belongs to him. If it does not take from him his own essential power as God, it cannot be understood as taking it from God absolutely considered. This also is impossible. What is necessary and essential cannot be taken away. The dominion in question springs naturally from the inseparable relation subsisting between God and his creatures. The delegation of power does not suppose the surrender of it, on the part of him from whom the delegation proceeds. When a king appoints a plenipotentiary to act for him, he does not divest himself of the inherent right to reign. And if this is the case where the persons appointing and appointed are essentially different, why should we find any difficulty in a case where they are 'the same in substance, and equal in power and glory?' Nay, so far from God's essential dominion being subverted by the mediatorial appointment, it might easily be shown to be confirmed and established by it in a variety of particulars.

If the view given in this chapter, of the appointment of Christ to mediatorial dominion be correct, there can be no difficulty in understanding how his regal acts were possessed of validity in the earliest ages of the church. This appointment had, to be sure, as we have seen, a special respect to his death; it was certainly conferred as the reward of his sufferings; and hence, he was not fully inaugurated till after his resurrection. Still, the administration of mediatorial rule existed from the time of the entrance of sin into our world. The son of God then entered on the administration of all his mediatorial functions; and on this, as well as others. The voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day, announced him as a *prophet:* the institution of sacrifices, which there is reason to think was coeval with the fall of man, exhibited him as a *priest:* and the warfare betwixt the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, which then commenced, unfolded his *regal* character. In this latter capacity, he never ceased afterwards to act. The formation of the church in Eden; the translation of Abel's righteous soul to glory; the reorganization of the church with Noah; the covenant made with Abraham, and renewed with Isaac and Jacob; the es-

tablishment of the Jewish economy under Moses; the many interpositions made on behalf of the armies of Israel, by which they were rendered victorious over their enemies; the appointment of Judges; and the raising up of kings in the line of David, to dispense the benefits of civil government to God's ancient people—are all so many regal acts of Prince Messiah. Accordingly, when he came in the flesh, he was recognized, not as entering upon, but as in the full possession of, royal prerogatives: 'Where is he that IS BORN KING of the Jews?'* And, even during the period of his humiliation, as has been before remarked, he claimed and received royal honours, as well as performed regal acts. Now, what we have said regarding his appointment, shows the validity of all these acts from the beginning. His appointment took place in the eternal counsels. It was, therefore, not only what he did after his resurrection, but all the acts which preceded it from the entrance of sin into the world, that were possessed of valid authority. This being the case, how presumptuous, how sinful were it, at any time, to question the rectitude or efficacy of any of his doings? He has a right to do as he pleases at all times. His sovereignty must never be doubted. Whether he erects or destroys, plants or plucks up, kills or makes alive, our duty is to bow with implicit submission to his righteous sceptre; acknowledging his title to do according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and, instead of seeking to impede the regular flow of his administration, shouting from the heart, 'O King, live for ever.'

Christ's appointment gives him a rightful claim to the implicit and conscientious obedience of every moral creature. 'Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the truth of God perfected.'† It is as mediatorial King that all his commands are given, and in this capacity is it that he is to be obeyed. Let men be convinced of this. He is no usurper. Great must be the guilt of refusing him submission; it is to resist lawful authority, to reject the appointment of God.

* Mat. ii 22. † John ii. 3—5.

This appointment affords ample security for the overthrow of all Christ's enemies, and the ultimate establishment of his kingdom in the world. Has God appointed him to rule, and shall any one be able to hinder his success? No; we have in this sufficient security that no opposition shall ever be able to prevent the progress of his reign. The counsel of the Lord, it shall stand. The heathen may rage, and the people imagine a vain thing; the kings of the earth may set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast their cords from us. But, having respect to the decree by which he has been set King on the holy hill of Zion, He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision; he shall break them with a rod of iron, he shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel; and the heathen shall be given to him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. Much reason, then, have the people of God to rejoice in the appointment of Christ to mediatorial dominion. Let them make themselves intelligently acquainted with the evidence by which it is supported, and exult in the stability of the foundation on which it rests—a foundation which no force of earth or hell can ever overthrow. The Lord said unto my Lord, Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies; thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.

CHAPTER V.

SPIRITUALITY OF CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL DOMINION.

The subjects which have hitherto engaged our attention, however important, may be viewed as preliminary. The necessity, reality, qualifications, and appointment of Christ's mediatorial dominion, prepare the way for an inquiry into what is of still greater moment—the nature of his mediatorial dominion itself. This we are now to consider. Nor can it be more clearly expressed than by saying, in one word, that the government of the Son of God, as Mediator, is strictly and properly *spiritual*. His kingdom is not an earthly or temporal kingdom, like the kingdoms of this world. It has a higher origin than they; it interferes, in no respect with the exercise of lawful civil authority; and the means by which its advancement is effected are altogether different from those which the rulers of this world employ.

When we speak of the dominion of the Mediator as spiritual, it is necessary, however, to guard against supposing that it can have no sort of connection with the world, or with things that are secular. Such an idea it is not at all our intention to convey. From not sufficiently attending to certain distinctions proper to be observed on this subject, the most mistaken and pernicious conclusions have been drawn. Because the dominion of Christ is spiritual in its nature, to conclude that every thing connected with his kingdom must be spiritual also, and that nothing earthly or secular can have any relation to it, is an inference alike illogical in reasoning, and unsupported by fact. The subjects of this spiritual kingdom, after being separated by grace from the world lying in wickedness, continue for a length of time in this lower region of human exist.

ence, before they are prepared for being transferred to that brighter, and higher, and more spiritual sphere of being in which they are to exist forever. Although not *of* this world as to their character, they are *in* this world as respects their place of abode. While, as saints, they number among the ranks of Christ's spiritual subjects, as men and as citizens they occupy their places and act their parts in the offices and institutions of civil society. While here, they have bodies which require to be fed, and clothed and protected; and even when their souls at death are taken to heaven, their material frames, redeemed by Christ and destined to undergo a remarkable change at the last day, sleep till then in the lower parts of the earth, where they are ever contemplated with interest, watched over with ceaseless care, and faithfully preserved by that Saviour-king, who claims an interest in and dominion over, their persons in both their constituent parts, material and immaterial. Thus, if the saints belong to the kingdom of the Mediator so long as these saints have bodies, this kingdom can never be so strictly spiritual as to exclude all sort of connection with matter.

Besides, the kingdom of Christ has a visible as well as an invisible form. This distinction is founded in fact, and is, we believe, universally admitted. Now, a visible church must have visible laws, visible ordinances, visible subjects, and visible office-bearers. And what but this world is the sphere where these laws are promulged, these ordinances observed, these subjects located, and these office-bearers find room for their labours? While God has a visible Church in the world, will there not be required outward erections for the ordinances of worship, and temporal emoluments for the support of its ministers and institutions?

Nay, more; we may venture to affirm, that, connected with the spiritual kingdom of the Mediator, there are some things which are in themselves strictly and literally worldly or secular. The dominion of Christ, as we shall have occasion afterwards more fully to explain, is universal. It includes ALL creatures without exception; not merely the church, visible and invisible, but all things, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, moral and immoral, individual and social, ecclesiastical and political. We cannot wait here either to explain or to prove this statement. It may suffice, at the time, to remind the reader of one or two

scripture passages by which the assertion is fully borne out. 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth:—He hath put all things under his feet—And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.'* If, according to these expressions of inspired truth, the mediatorial rule extends over all things, many things strictly secular and worldly must be somehow or other connected with Christ's kingdom; and such a view of the spirituality of this kingdom as is incompatible with any sort of connection with the things of this world, is thus manifestly erroneous and untenable.

The kingdom of Christ is truly spiritual; yet, connected with this kingdom, it seems there may be many things which are properly secular. The kingdom of Christ is not of this world; yet many worldly things are connected with Christ's kingdom. These statements are not inconsistent. We may find it difficult to reconcile them; we may feel ourselves at a loss to find out a harmonizing principle; but we must neither, on the one hand, deny the fact, nor, on the other, impute contradiction to the words of Christ or the language of scripture. We must not think ourselves warranted, to avoid the difficulty in question, in substituting a quibble for a sober interpretation, or in proceeding to restrict the mediatorial rule agreeably to our own partial and limited views, by cutting off from his economical prerogative whatever is not strictly of a spiritual character. Such would be to use an unwarrantable liberty with the word of God, to interpret the Bible as no other compositon will admit of being interpreted, and to take an ungenerous advantage of the mere sound of words to support an opinion, which, however convenient to be espoused, cannot but be viewed by every unbiassed mind as derogatory in no small degree from the honour of our king.

Happily we are not reduced to the painful necessity of adopting any such course. The two ideas are perfectly capable of being reconciled. All that is required for this purpose, is, that whatever is connected with Christ's kingdom be understood to be somehow or other *subservient* to spiritual objects,—objects not terminating with, but superi-

* Mat. xxviii. 18; 1 Cor. xv. 27; Eph. i. 22.

or to, and outliving in duration, the present world. Although everything connected with this kingdom may not be in itself spiritual, everything connected with it may be subservient to what is spiritual. The grand aim and purpose of the whole may be of this description, while many things of a different nature may be connected with it as subordinate to this end. The dominion of the Messiah may extend over many things besides the church, and may comprehend many creatures besides the saints, and yet embrace nothing but what is somehow or another fitted to be of service to these. The Father has given him to be head over *all* things; but the reason of this does not terminate in these things themselves; it points to a higher and more spiritual object; He has given him to be head over all things TO THE CHURCH which is his body. Thus much is freely conceded; whatever power the Mediator possesses is for the good of the church; given and exercised for this purpose. But what we ask, is not for the good of the church? But for the church would the sun continue to shine, the rain to fall, the earth to vegetate? Would the wheels of Providence continue to revolve, or the pillars of the universe to be upheld? No. The church is the great conservative element of the world and all that is in it; nor is there any thing which is not capable of being rendered, by infinite wisdom and power, subservient to the interests of God's covenant society. Here, then, we are furnished with a solution of the difficulty formerly supposed. Every system derives its character and designation from that which constitutes its ultimate end or aim, and not from any inferior or subordinate appendage. We call that an enlightened and virtuous kingdom, whose constitution and administration have for their direct object the promotion of knowledge and morality, notwithstanding that some of the subjects may be wicked, ignorant, or even insane. We call that person spiritual, who gives evidence, from the obvious tendency of his general demeanour, that he is born from above and destined for glory, although many of his thoughts and pursuits may have a relation to this world, and even some of his actions be sinful. Thus it is with the kingdom of Christ. We call it a spiritual kingdom, inasmuch as the great design of its existence is spiritual, notwithstanding that, among the things connected with it, there may be many that are material, and perhaps even worldly.

True, Christ said of the church, 'my kingdom is not of this world.' But, if by this he is understood to affirm that his kingdom is so absolutely spiritual as to have no connexion whatever with what is secular or earthly, then are we not bound to conclude that when he said of his disciples, 'ye are not of this world,' he meant it to be understood that Christians could lawfully hold no worldly property, engage in no worldly enterprise, nor enter into any political connexion whatever? The phrases are in both cases precisely similar; and as, in the latter instance, it would be absurd, and contradictory both to scripture and common-sense, to contend for the exclusive interpretation in question, so must it be in the former.

Thus much it was deemed necessary to premise, to prevent misconception, and to obviate a common mistake, which might operate as a stumbling-block at the very threshhold of this branch of our subject. It will now be understood that when we speak of the dominion of the Mediator as spiritual, we mean that its nature and design are wholly celestial, that it is of a character different from the kingdoms of this world, and destined to higher and more glorious purposes.

The *origin* of the mediatorial dominion, as unfolded in the preceding chapter, illustrates its distinction, in respect of spirituality, from the kingdoms of this world. These all originate in what is natural. Lawful civil authority in general, is, doubtless, an ordinance of God; but, as respects the immediate origin of each individual kingdom, it is an ordinance of man. Whether taking rise from the elective power of the people, from hereditary succession, from conquest, or from usurpation, dominion among men is natural in its origin. To some the crown descends by lineal succession from ancestors from whose heads it has just been displaced by the hand of death. Others have the sceptre bestowed on them by the unconstrained suffrage and cheerful acclamation of a free and happy people. Others, again, establish their right by might, assert their claims by the power of the sword, wade to sovereignty through seas of blood, and mount to the throne on the slaughtered bodies of the men whom they seek to govern. It is otherwise far with the dominion of which we are now treating. The crown of our Mediatorial King was worn by no predecessor; he is its original and exclusive possessor. He enjoys, it is

true, the welcome of his spiritual subjects, but this is the result of his administration, and not the source of his authority; and, although blood be connected with the establishment of his reign, it is not the blood of his subjects or enemies, but his own blood, the very shedding of which pre-supposes an existing right to rule and act as a king. His dominion originates solely in immediate divine appointment, in the spiritual grant of his Father from all everlasting in the covenant of grace. *My Father hath appointed unto me a kingdom.* To such an origin, no kingdom of this world can lay claim; to such a grant, no monarch among men can pretend. These are of the 'earth, earthy;' this is 'from above.' *The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into his hand.*

The *ends* contemplated by this dominion are spiritual. The immediate ends for which kingdoms among men are set up, are of course worldly ends. The taste or caprice of particular rulers may occasion a variety in the ojects contemplated; it being the ambition of one to wallow in sensuality, of another to extend his conquests, of a third to make an ostentatious display of pomp and vain-glory. Even when only legitimate ends are regarded, it is the administration of public justice, the preservation of peace, the advancement of morals, and the establishment of social order, that are immediately contemplated by civil authority. These are all right and proper in themselves; but they are different from, and inferior to, the ends of Christ's mediatorial dominion. Those bear a closer relation to the value of the soul, the greatness of the human mind, the vastness of human desires, the immortal destiny of man. To give light to them that are in spiritual darkness, to rescue from the tyranny of sinful passions, to purge the conscience from dead works, to renovate the heart, to sanctify the life, to swallow up death in victory, and to shut the mouth of the infernal abyss,—in one word to save the soul, is the grand end of the mediatorial dominion. A worldly kingdom has to do with the lives and property of men, that of Christ with their hearts and consciences. The one has a respect to their interests in the world that now is, the other to those in the world that is to come. The one aims at making men good subjects, the other at making them true saints. The ends contemplated by the kingdoms of this world terminate in time, but those contemplated by the dominion of the Mediator point forward to, and can be consummated only in, an

eternal state of being. Not but that earthly dominion may be so conducted as to subserve the interests of the soul and of eternity, just as the dominion of the Mediator cannot but produce the temporal interests and social advantages of mankind; but we speak now, not of the collateral or indirect tendencies of each, but of their direct and immediate ends,—which are in the one case worldly, and in the other spiritual. 'For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost.'

The *administration* of Christ's kingdom is spiritual. It is administered, as are the kingdoms of this world, by office-bearers, government, and laws; but these are, in the case under consideration, of a character altogether different from those which obtain in other cases. Here, the officers are not persons invested with magisterial authority, and armed with civil weapons; but pastors and teachers, elders and deacons, persons endowed with ministerial authority, whose weapons are not carnal but spiritual. The government and discipline they are appointed to administer addresses themselves to the understandings, and hearts, and consciences of men; they aim at something more than laying restraints, as civil government does, on the persons and overt acts of men; their object is to influence the motives of action and to restrain the inward passions of the soul. The ministers, to whom the management of this government is committed, are made overseers by the Holy Ghost. They assume no right, like civil rulers, to enact, command, or enjoin in their own name; they are 'not lords over God's heritage.' When they issue their counsels, it is in the name of the Lord, being prefaced with 'Thus saith the Lord,' or 'It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us to lay upon you those necessary things.' They claim not to have dominion over their people's faith, but to be helpers of their joy. Instead of the stern voice of authority, which, at the peril of property, liberty, or life, must be obeyed, they appeal to the law and to the testimony, and invite a strict scrutiny of whatever they utter. *We speak as unto wise men, judge ye what we say.* They claim no power over the persons or purses of men. The penalties they denounce, are not fines, imprisonment, and death. They bear not the *sword;* but, entrusted with the *keys* of the kingdom of heaven, view it as their prerogative to 'open or shut' the doors of ecclesiastical privilege, according to character. Instruction and advice, censure and

remonstrance, are the only weapons they feel themselves at liberty to employ. They can reprove, rebuke, exhort with all authority. When repeated admonition has failed to produce the desired effect, they can reject; when milder measures have proved insufficient, they may proceed in the name of the Lord Jesus to deliver over the offender to Satan for the destruction of the flesh: but physical violence they may never use, to produce a constrained submission. The conscience, with which alone they have to do, cannot be influenced by fire or steel. Standing armies, well-stored magazines, swords and muskets, form no part of their equipments. No. 'If my kingdom,' says Christ 'were of this world, then would my servants fight: but now is my kingdom not from hence.' The instruments, the use of which He recognises as legitimate, are:—the *Bible;* the word of God which is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, the sword of the spirit, the sharp two-edged sword which goeth out of the mouth of him who is Alpha and Omega:—the *cross;* the preaching of which is the most effectual means of turning men from darkness to light, of thinning the ranks of Satan, and increasing the number of true adherents to the Captain of salvation:—the *example* of Him who is the great pattern of perfection; whose contempt of the world appeared in that he 'had not where to lay his head'—his meekness, in 'bearing the contradiction of sinners'—his patience, in that 'when he was reviled he reviled not again'—and his active benevolence, in continually 'going about doing good.' These, under the hallowed influence of the Holy Spirit of all grace, are the means of enlightening, renewing, sanctifying, and consoling men, and of thus bringing them to be, and qualifying them to act as, subjects of Christ's spiritual kingdom. 'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong-holds.' 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.'

The *principles* on which the administration of Christ's kingdom is conducted, are spiritual principles. It disclaims all sympathy with the maxims on which the kingdoms of this world are too often administered, maxims which are, not seldom, infidel, fallacious, and ungrateful. The attainment of national prosperity, or the carrying of some great measure of civil policy, is too frequently regarded by statesmen so important in itself as to warrant any means that may be

deemed necessary to gain it. The kingdom of anti-christ is not the only one which has lent its sanction to the abominable maxim that the end sanctifies the means. Very different, indeed, are the principles on which the Mediatorial King conducts his spiritual administration. Instead of the common and pernicious sentiment, that personal virtues are not necessary in public men, it is an established maxim here that 'he that ruleth over men must be just,' and that trust is to be committed only to 'faithful men.' Instead of supposing that, if the laws of the nation are only understood, honoured, and acted upon by men in power, it matters not how much the law of God may be overlooked and contemned, it is provided here that rulers shall have a copy of the law, and shall read in it continually. Instead of regarding it as a matter of inferior moment how much private wickedness may abound in a land, provided only that public tranquillity and obedience to the laws can be preserved, it is here a first principle that 'righteousness exhalteth a nation, and that sin is a disgrace to any people.' In the kingdoms of the world it is a principle too much acted upon, that a state of warfare warrants us to treat an enemy without pity, sincerity, or even humanity; but, in the kingdom of Christ, it is an immutable law that 'all things whatsoever we would that men should do to us, we should do even so to them.' But there is no end to the contrast; and the longer it is pursued it will become not the more evident that 'the kingdom of Christ is not of this world,' than that 'the kingdoms of this world' are *not yet* 'become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.'

In short, almost *every thing* connected with this kingdom is spiritual. The King himself is no worldly prince, but the Lord from heaven, who is a quickening spirit. The subjects are a spiritual community, consisting of persons who have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit as an essential and indispensable qualification to their admission; for 'except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' The laws by which they are governed are spiritual laws, which take cognizance of the heart. The homage paid to the sovereign Lord, instead of vain and empty ceremonies, consists in the sincere and pious devotion of the soul. His throne is such as no king of this earth ever occupied, an eternal heavenly throne; 'thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever.' His sceptre is a righteous sceptre, even the rod

of strength sent out of Zion, by which he rules in the midst of his enemies. His courtiers are not those who, by intriguing complaisance and mean arts of adulation, contrive to bask in the sunshine of royal favour; but 'whosoever shall do the will of his Father, who is in heaven.' His attendant retinue is composed, not of fawning sycophants and feigned friends, but of the immortal sons of light, angels and archangels ten thousand strong. Thus, in whatever light we contemplate it, the spirituality of Christ's kingdom stands forth as a prominent and well-established feature. Nor is it possible not to be impressed with the affecting confirmation this view of the matter received from his appearance on earth. He steadfastly resisted every attempt to invest him with the attributes of an earthly sovereign. 'When Jesus perceived that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, he departed into a mountain himself alone.' With temporal aggrandisement and the showy trappings of royalty, he would have nothing to do. The only occasion on which he enjoyed any thing approaching to a triumphal procession, was when he entered into Jerusalem, and then he rode upon an ass. The only robe of office, in which he was ever arrayed, was an old cast-off military cloak, thrown around him by his enemies in derision of his regal claims. The only sceptre he ever handled was a reed. The only diadem he ever wore, was a crown of thorns. For his throne he had assigned him a cross. And the homage offered him by the men of this world, consisted only in their pointing at him with the finger of scorn, spitting on him, and striking him with the palms of their hands. Well mightest thou say, O Jesus! 'my kingdom is not of this world.'

This view of the mediatorial dominion is one of great practical importance. The tendency to take a carnal view of the kingdom of the Messiah is deeply seated in the human heart, and has appeared in every age. It was the radical error of the unbelieving Jews. The prophecies respecting the glory of the Messiah they interpreted literally. They expected him to appear as a temporal prince, to put himself at the head of his countrymen, to rescue them from the yoke of Romish subjection, and to restore the kingdom to its original and rightful possessors. Because Jesus of Nazareth did not fulfil these expectations, they could not look upon him as the true Messiah. To them he appeared as a root

out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness; they saw no beauty in him for which they should desire him. Blinded by their carnal prejudices, they could not bring themselves to believe, that the prediction that the Messiah should wield a sceptre was fulfilled in one who held only a reed—that the prediction that the Messiah should wear a diadem, was fulfilled in one who was crowned only with thorns—or that the prediction that the Messiah should occupy a throne, was fulfilled in one who occupied only a cross. The event, which ought to have corrected their error and suggested to them the true interpretation, instead of leading them to spiritual ideas of his character and reign, only drove them to the mad extreme of contempt, crucifixion, and rejection. Their descendants to the present day adhere to their opinion and follow their example, solely from the influence of the same carnal views. It becomes those, to whom God has given more scriptural and spiritual ideas, to pity their mistake; to pray for their illumination; and to do every thing in their power to reclaim them from so fatal an error. Ye sons of Abraham! ye wandering tribes of Israel! —still beloved for the fathers' sakes—be entreated to abandon the prejudices by which you are held in mental bondage; burst your ignoble thraldom; and, giving a spiritual interpretation to the glowing imagery of your prophets, behold the fulfilment of their predictions in the despised Nazarine!

The error of those who look for a literal advent of Christ and a literal reign upon earth, during the millennium, must be traced to the same source, namely, to their overlooking the spirituality of the mediatorial dominion. They expect a visible descent of the Redeemer in his glorified human nature, to erect a local court, to sit upon a literal throne, and to conduct a temporal reign for at least a thousand years. With the erroneous system of interpretation on which this wild opinion is built, and the many errors and absurdities it involves, we are not at present concerned. Its manifest inconsistency with the view of the Mediator's kingdom given above, is that to which we would now direct attention. The two are utterly incompatible; and, if we have been at all successful in proving that the kingdom of Christ is a spiritual kingdom, the system in question must fall to the ground, for its whole tendency is to represent this kingdom as a temporal one, to secularize our entire views on

the subject, to revive the exploded rites and opinions of carnal Judaism, and to bring back upon the church the yoke of beggarly elements from which Christ has made us free. Let those who are in danger of being seduced by the doctrine in question, ponder well the evidence with which they are furnished in support of the spirituality of the kingdom of Christ. Let them be jealous of the tendency there is in the human heart to be carried away with what strikes the senses in preference to that which appeals to faith. Let them profit by the case of the unhappy Jews, who, by yielding to this natural tendency, have been plunged into the gulf of unbelief, and are still suffering the just award of their iniquity, 'The letter killeth; the spirit giveth life.'

It is impossible here to overlook the means with which we are thus furnished, of forming a right estimate of the church of Rome, and of determining the question whether that church be Christian or anti-christian. It pretends to be Christ's kingdom upon earth, and the only church which can lay claim to this distinction. Well, Christ's kingdom is not of this world—it is a spiritual kingdom;—a kingdom of truth, and righteousness, and love, and peace; a kingdom whose office-bearers, ends, administration, and appendages, are all of a spiritual character. How does the state of things in the Romish church accord with this view? Look at the Roman pontiff, the representative on earth of Him who strenuously refused to be made a king, who studiously avoided all interference with the civil authorities, who wore a crown of thorns, and expired on a cross. You behold on his head a triple crown, glittering with gold and sparkling with diamonds; his vestments are of the most costly and gorgeous materials; at his side hang golden keys; grasping the sword of temporal power, he lays claim to a universal, civil, as well as ecclesiastical, authority; and adding the imperial diadem to the sacerdotal mitre, he prostrates even monarchs at his feet. Enter the Vatican, the habitation of the pretended successor of Him whose kingdom is not of this world, and what do you behold but the unequivocal insignia of temporal power, and all the gaudy paraphernalia of earthly pomp and grandeur? Visit a cathedral, where the highest acts of devotion are professedly engaged in to Him who is a Spirit, and who requires such as worship him to worship him in spirit and in truth. There you meet with lofty domes, massive pillars, pictorial decorations on which

the most accomplished artists have expended their skill, splendid vestments, voluptuous music, smoking incense, and sparkling lights ;—everything, in short, to strike the senses rather than affect the heart, to glitter in the eye rather than impress the conscience. These are scandalous departures from the character of that kingdom which is not of this world ; at the same time that they are standing proofs that the church of Rome has no right to be regarded as a church of Christ : they are the unequivocal, ineffaceable marks of anti-christianism.

May not this subject be of use, farther, in enabling us to test the character of even protestant systems of religion ? The diversity of sentiment existing among protestant churches, is truly painful and bewildering ; and it is desirable to be furnished with some principles by which we may estimate their respective conflicting claims. Here is one—the degree of spirituality that they possess. The system which has the least of worldly pomp, which least depends on the smiles of the men of the world, which has fewest attractions for the carnal heart ; the system which, at the same time, pays most respect to the spiritual principles, and best subserves the spiritual ends, of Christ's kingdom, is that which has the strongest claims on our regard. This is a test that few churches can well stand. The episcopal church of England, tried by this standard, will be found wanting. In her present half-reformed state, she retains many of those worldly appendages and outward ceremonies by which the church of Rome is characterized ; and a thorough purgation of these, together with a more spiritual system of preaching and administering the sacraments, and a revival of discipline, are required to bring her into even a decent show of conformity to the kingdom which is not of this world. The Scottish establishment also, though far from being in the same situation with that in England, would do well to subject itself to a searching application of the criterion of which we are now speaking. Although unexceptionable in her doctrinal standards and forms of worship, her friends would do well to consider, whether there be not some things, both in the tone of preaching which extensively prevails, and in the appendages of some of her courts, which will not bear the rigid application of a strictly spiritual test. Nor let communities which exist in a state of separation from the national church, think that *they* have no need to try them.

selves by this test. In all of them, even the purest, will be found, we fear, a measure of the spirit of the world, and departure from the simplicity and spirituality of the primitive model, sufficient to warrant humiliation and call for amendment. In choosing an ecclesiastical profession, perhaps no principle of guidance can be more safe than the degree of spirituality of which a church may be possessed. We cannot be too much on our guard against being deceived by worldly glare, or by the worldly advantages which connexion with a particular community may offer. Are there not many who deceive themselves in this respect;—many who, in joining a church, are influenced in their choice by the worldly respectability it possesses, or by the ease with which, in its communion, they can indulge the love and pursuit of the world; while the reasons by which they are determined against other churches, are their poverty, simplicity, strictness, and spirituality.

For persons as well as churches, the principle in question furnishes a means of trial. It is well fitted to aid in examining into our own personal character. Who are the subjects of Christ's kingdom? Such only as are spiritual. Not the vain, the sensual, the passionate, the worldly; but the humble, the meek, the mortified, the self-denied. Such as adopt, not the maxims of the world, but the principles of the gospel. Not such as permit their hearts to be engrossed with the things of earth, and lavish their attentions on its possessions, its grandeur, pomp, and parade; but such as, looking on the world and all things that are in it as transitory, content themselves with little, and cherish a heavenly spirit. Not such, in fine, as restrict their views to time; but such as look steadfastly forward to an eternal state of being while they live, and expect, when they die, that an entrance shall be ministered to them abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Soon shall this world and all that belongs to it be at an end; and it concerns those who have no hope beyond the present, to consider what they shall do when old age arrives, or when death knocks at the door of their chamber, and summons them away. Then true wisdom will be found with those who have obeyed the command of the Saviour: 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added thereunto.'

CHAPTER VI.

UNIVERSALITY OF CHRIST'S MEDIATORIAL DOMINION.

THE topic on which we are now to descant is of very great importance, but it is one on which much misconception exists. There are some who deny the fact altogether; and others, who, though compelled to admit the fact, have very inadequate ideas of the place which it is entitled to hold in estimating the dominion of the Mediator. There s one short clause, in the writings of the Apostle Paul, which both these classes of individuals would do well to consider. It is that in which, speaking of Christ's exaltation by the Father, he uses the expression, 'AND GAVE HIM TO BE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH'—language which asserts at once the unlimited extent of the mediatorial power, and the high and glorious end for which such power is conferred.

The connection of Christ's universal power with the honour awarded him by the Father for the work of man's redemption, is sufficient to test its importance. That which entered into the stipulations of the eternal covenant, and which occupied the mind of the Saviour throughout the whole period of his sufferings, his last mysterious agony not even excepted, cannot, surely, be deemed a matter of inferior moment. Now, we are assured, that 'for the joy set before him he endured the cross;' and that this joy included that of which we are speaking, the language of the same inspired writer clearly imports, 'He humbled himself

and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name *above every name*, that at the name of Jesus *every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.*'—Besides, the doctrine of universal supremacy was one of the last things which he taught his disciples. Just before his ascension, in the last interview he held with his apostles on earth, in which surely nothing but what is of the highest importance could find a place, he said, 'ALL power is given unto me in heaven and on earth.' —Moreover, the possession of universal power must, on a moment's reflection, appear to be intimately connected with the interests of the church. Power beyond the church is essential to the existence, increase, and welfare of the church itself. That the members of his mystical body may be complete in him, he must have dominion over all principalities and powers. The overthrow of the church's foes, the fulfilment of the church's prospects, and the final victory of every member over death and the grave, suppose him to rule with uncontrollable sway in the midst of his enemies. 'For he must reign till all his enemies be put under his feet.'—These things may be sufficient to convince the unprejudiced mind, of the vast importance of the feature of the mediatorial dominion of which we are about to treat. But, should there still remain a single sceptical doubt about this point on the reader's mind, it cannot fail to be removed when he is reminded that the fact of Christ's universal reign enters into the praises of heaven, and is echoed from the arches of the celestial temple. 'And I heard,' says John, 'the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the living creatures, and the elders, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto the Lamb forever and ever. Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.'

No doctrine in scripture is supported by clearer and more abundant evidence than the universality of Christ's mediatorial dominion. Before exhibiting the passages in which it is expressly affirmed, it may be proper to state, that what determines that the passages in question refer to the mediatorial, and not to the essential, kingdom of the Son of God, is the fact that the power spoken of in these pas-

sages is said to be *given* to him. His essential authority over all things is original, inherent, underived. It is necessarily possessed, and can in no sense be said to be given. That which is said to be delegated, conferred by gift, bestowed by another, can belong to him only as Mediator. Nor is it necessary that the territory over which the sovereignty is exercised by inherent right, and that over which it is exercised by delegated authority, should be actually different in matter or extent. They may in reality be the same in substance, and of course equal in extent; the difference consisting in this, that the kingdom over which he, as the son of God, rules by inherent and original right, he is, as Mediator, authorized to manage and direct for a new end, namely, the salvation of men, and the best interests of the church. His investiture with Mediatorial dominion, thus means his having conferred on him a right to employ the power which he always possessed as God, for the specific objects of his mediatorial work. The essential and the mediatorial kingdoms of Christ may, therefore, be of equal extent; and we need not wonder to find the inspired writers ascribing the gift of universal power to Him whose essential dominion is absolute and unlimited. These things premised, we are prepared to look at the scripture proof for the universality of the mediatorial dominion.

'All things are delivered unto me of my Father.'* These are the words of Christ to his disciples. The connexion shows that it is of his mediatorial power he is speaking, as it is in this character that he is said to know and to be known by the Father, and to reveal the Father to others. The very word 'delivered' carries in it the same idea, as his power as God is not delivered to him, but essentially and intrinsically possessed. Now, the affirmation respects universal power—'all things,' παντα—not an exception being so much as hinted at.

'And Jesus came and spake to them saying, All power is given to me in heaven and in earth.'† This is, if possible, still more decided. As in the former instance, both the context, which relates to the apostolical commission, and the language itself, 'given,' show that the mediatorial character is meant. And, as to the extent of what he attributes to himself in this character, the words are 'all power, in

*Mat. xi. 27. † Mat. xxviii. 18.

heaven and in earth'—πασα εξουσια εν ουρανῳ και επι γης—expressive of universality in the largest sense.

To the same purpose are the words of Peter in his discourse at Cesarea. Speaking of Jesus Christ in connexion with the peace which is preached through him, and of course as Mediator, he says, in an emphatic parenthesis—'He is Lord of all,' παντων Κυριος.* The term 'Lord' denotes authoritative power, and the 'all' may be either persons, things, or both.

'And hath put ALL things (παντα) under his feet, and gave him to be head over ALL things (παντα) to the church.'† The terms 'put' and 'gave' mark, with sufficient precision, the character in which Christ is here spoken of by the apostle, while the extent of grant is abundantly explicit.

Not less decisive is the language of the same inspired writer in another epistle:—'And ye are complete in him which is the head of ALL principality and power,' ἡ κεφαλη πασης αρχης και εξουσιας.‡

'For he hath *put* ALL things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him; it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him,'§ This is the only instance in which an exception is stated to the universality of the mediatorial dominion; and it must be obvious that the exception strengthens greatly our position. The only exception stated, is the Father, who confers on him the mediatorial dominion; and the specifying of this shows that there is not another, proves that the mediatorial dominion embraces everything in the universe but God.

One more direct scripture proof may suffice. And it is of such a character, that, had there not been another in the bible, it were itself sufficient to support the doctrine we are seeking to establish. Its phraseology seems purposely framed to place it beyond the power of any one to find a plausible pretext for setting the slightest limit to the official dominion of the Son of God. 'But one, in a certain place, testified saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; thou hast put ALL things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, HE LEFT NOTHING THAT IS NOT PUT UNDER HIM.'‖ The reference is to the

* Acts x. 36. † Eph. i. 22. ‡ Col. ii. 10. § 1 Cor. xv. 27 ‖ Heb. ii. 6—8

eighth Psalm. The purpose for which the words of the psalm are quoted by the apostle, shows that it is the Messiah who is spoken of. The universality of dominion ascribed, cannot be affirmed of man in the ordinary sense of the term; other worlds and angels not being made subject to him. Besides, a part of the psalm is applied elsewhere to the Redeemer.*

Here, then, we have ample proof in support of our position, to which every believer in the scriptures must pay respect. We can conceive of nothing more decisive or complete. Nothing but the blinding influence of prejudice, interest, or error, can account for such plain testimony being resisted. Whatever some may find it convenient to maintain, it is clear that neither Christ nor his apostles entertained the most distant thought of the Mediatorial power being limited, but rejoiced in the truth that 'his kingdom ruleth over all.' Let us open our minds to the same blessed truth, and dismiss from us forever every thing that would tempt us to espouse a sentiment so diametrically opposed to the testimony of the word of God.

It may be added, that every thing which renders the Mediatorial dominion necessary at all, requires it to be of universal extent. It could easily be shown that, to the fulfilment of the purposes of the divine will respecting the elect—to the completion of Christ's character as a Saviour, to his being fitly rewarded for his obedience unto the death—as well as to his successful overthrow of his enemies, nothing less than universal power could suffice. But these things are so palpable, that to dwell upon them at length would be only to weaken their force. It will serve a better purpose to classify and particularize some of the 'all things' that are put under Christ's feet.

Even *inanimate* and *irrational* creation is placed under the Mediator. 'Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet; all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea.'† This passage is, as we have seen, quoted in the epistle to the Hebrews, with express application to Jesus Christ.‡ The objects specified are the inferior parts of creation, but of these there is no exception.

* Mat. xxi. 15, 16. † Ps. viii. 6—8. ‡ Heb. ii. 6—9.

The language comprehends matter in every form, organized and disorganized: the planetary bodies in general, the earth with its water and dry land in particular, the mineral kingdom, and the vegetable world, are all included in 'the works of God's hands:' while the inferior animals of every tribe are expressly enumerated, 'the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea.' Nor was it unnecessary that the Mediatorial grant should embrace such particulars as these. Far from it. The material world owes its preservation to this circumstance. It is the Mediator who 'upholds all things by the word of his power.' But for the dispensation of divine mercy of which this earth is the theatre, we have no reason to believe that it would have survived the fall of man. This is the grand conservative element by which it is enabled to withstand the destructive tendency of the dreadful penalty denounced on man's disobedience.—When the guilty pair put forth their hands, plucked the forbidden fruit, and ate,

> 'Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat,
> Sighing through all her works, gave signs of wo
> That all was lost.
> Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
> In pangs; and Nature gave a second groan;
> Sky lower'd, and muttering thunder, some sad drops
> Wept at completing of the mortal sin
> Original.'*

But, while clouds obscure the horizon, and thunders roll in tremendous peals alongst the sky, and the earth quakes to its very centre, and every thing portends immediate and inevitable destruction; when the earth, and the inhabitants thereof, are about to be dissolved, forth steps the divine Mediator, grasps it with his almighty hand, and 'bears up the pillars of it.'† Without this interposition, the interests of the church at large would not have been subserved, either in the way of protection or of propagation; nor could her members individually have been fed, clothed, and preserved, while they live, or their bodies have been raised up at the last day.

With regard to the inferior animals, the right of dominion over them, given to man at his creation, was forfeited by sin. They are no longer his willing subjects; the service

* Par. Lost, B. ix. † Ps. lxxv. 3.

he receives from them he has to extort by constraint. Instead of flocking around him, as in innocence, they flee from his presence. They dread him as their enemy, instead of loving and revering him as their lord. Many of them, assuming superiority in their turn, cast upon him a glance of hostile defiance, and compel him to betake himself to flight, that he may escape falling a victim to their merciless ferocity. And to what but to the Mediatorial interposition is it owing, that man retains any control whatever over the lower animals, and that the members of the church have secured to them, among other privileges, a covenant with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground?* No other satisfactory account can be given of this, than that which is supplied by the fact of God's having put under the feet of his Son 'all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea.'

The history of the church amply and beautifully illustrates this department of Mediatorial rule. It is no dream that the sun, moon, and stars, do obeisance to our New Testament Joseph. At what but his command was it, that, of old, the sun stood still for a time on the dial of Ahaz? To what but to his power can it be ascribed that the strange order was exactly obeyed—'Sun, stand thou still upon Gideon, and thou Moon, in the valley of Ajalon?' Or to what but to this was it owing, that 'the stars in their courses fought against Sisera?' The winds and the waves, too, acknowledge his power. He it was who made the waters of the Red Sea to stand up on a heap till his people passed through, and then to collapse for the destruction of their enemies. At his command it was, that Jordan was dried up, to make a way for the ransomed of the Lord to enter into their promised inheritance. His power over the element of fire, appears in his preserving unhurt the three children whom the incensed monarch of Babylon caused to be thrown into the burning fiery furnace, heated seven times more than it was wont to be heated. And his power over the opposite element, appears in his casting down upon the Canaanitish kings, at Beth-horon, great stones from heaven, so that there were more who died with hailstones than they whom the children of Israel slew with the sword. The *beasts of the field*, whether domestic or un-

* Hos. ii. 18.

tamed, obeyed his command. When he wanted a colt, on which, in fulfilment of his prophecy, to ride into Jerusalem, he had only to send his disciples to a particular spot, where they found one standing ready for his use, which they appropriated, unchallenged, because 'the Lord hath need of him.' When his servant Daniel was thrown into the den of lions, he sent his angel to shut their mouths, and when he was taken up out of the den, no manner of hurt was found upon him. The *fowls* of the air are no less subject to his control. When the inhabitants of the ark were becoming anxious for the abating of the waters of the deluge, he it was who commissioned the dove with an olive leaf in its mouth, to intimate that the waters had begun to be assuaged. When the prophet by the brook Cherith was hungry, and had no means of obtaining food, ravens, under the same infallible and resistless guidance, brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; their own natural appetites being restrained to prevent their consuming these supplies themselves. Nor are we without examples of his power over the *fish* of the sea. He ordered his disciples to let down the net on the right side of the ship, and immediately there was enclosed a great draught of fishes. When he was in want of money to meet the demands of temple tribute, he instructed one of his attendants to go to the sea and cast a hook, and the fish which first came up had in its mouth the money required. Even reptiles and insects felt his authority, as appears from some of the plagues sent on the Egyptians; from the fiery serpents by which the rebellious Israelites were so severely chastised; and from the viper fixing on the hand of an apostle, without doing him harm. How true it is that the Mediatorial dominion extends over the inanimate and irrational parts of creation; and how fully do the facts of the church's history illustrate this extent of power!

If from the lower parts of creation we ascend to the highest, we shall still find traces of the Mediatorial dominion. Christ exercises rule over *angels*. These constitute the highest order of intelligent and moral creatures with which we are acquainted. Of their character, rank, attributes, and employments, we know but little. But this we know assuredly, that, in all their orders and degrees, they are without exception put in subjection to the Messiah. It is only

necessary here to view them in their two grand divisions, of good and bad, or fallen and unfallen.

Christ's Mediatorial dominion extends to holy angels—those who, when their fellow-spirits rebelled, kept their first estate. Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, represents him as seated 'far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion,'* terms which are understood to denote the different orders of angelic creatures. Peter also speaks of him as He 'who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; ANGELS, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him.'† As God, he has an undoubted essential right of dominion over such: but that something different from this is meant in these passages is plain from the context, and also from the phraseology employed, especially in the latter case. Angels could be *made subject* to Christ, only in his Mediatorial capacity. The account given in scripture of the services of these bright and happy beings, both to the Head of the church, and to the members of his mystical body, throws the clearest light on the general statements to which we have just referred. Holy angels surround the throne of the Mediatorial King:—'In the year that king Uzziah died,' sings the son of Amos, 'I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims.'‡ They offer him the tribute of their lofty adoration at the command, 'Let all the angels of God worship him,' for they cry with a loud voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.'‖ They attended him at Sinai, when the law was 'ordained by *angels* in the hand of a Mediator.'§ When he

> 'Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
> And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay,'

an 'angel choir' descended on the plains of Bethlehem, and sung the hymn of his nativity:—'And suddenly a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.'¶ Angels ministered to him in his state of humiliation: when

* Eph. i. 21. † 1 Pet. iii. 22. ‡ Isa. vi. 1, 2.
‖ Heb. i. 6; Rev. v. 11, 12. § Gal. iii. 19. ¶ Luke ii. 13, 14.

the devil left him in the wilderness, 'Behold angels came and ministered unto him.'* And, during his mysterious agony in the garden, 'there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.'† On the first day of the week when he rose from the dead, 'Behold, there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre;'‡ and, taking his station there, was the first to announce his tidings of his resurrection to the disciples who visited his tomb. Angels accompanied him at his ascension to the Father's right hand:—'The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels.'‖ And when, at the last day, he shall come again to judgment,—'The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.'§

Holy angels are commissioned by the Mediator to perform a variery of important services to the members of the church. 'Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?'¶ The 'heirs of salvation' are, of course, those on whom God has chosen to bestow deliverance from all evil, and the possession of all good, as a rich, manifold, extensive, and imperishable inheritance, freely bequeathed to them as children. To such the holy angels minister in holy things in a variety of ways. Setting aside the learned fancies of certain ancient philosophers, regarding the peculiar occupations of these celestial beings; discarding, as without foundation in the word of God, the Socratic notion of one guardian spirit being assigned to each saint; the following ideas respecting the ministry of angels, a subject of high interest, but confessedly of considerable difficulty, may be gathered from the scriptures of truth.

Holy angels, under the Mediator, exercise a certain inspection over the people of God. 'Suffer not,' says Solomon, 'thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin; neither say thou *before the angel*, that it was an error: wherefore should God be angry at thy voice, and destroy the work of thy

* Mat. iv. 11. † Luke xxii. 43. ‡ Mat. xxviii. 2.
‖ Ps. lxviii. 17. § 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. ¶ Heb. i. 14.

hands ?'* If the angel in this passage means, as is supposed by some, one of the celestial hierarchy, such are plainly to be considered as taking cognizance of the sayings and doings of men. The most plausible interpretation of an obscure passage in the writings of Paul, proceeds on the same supposition :—'For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels,'†—angelic inspection being here urged as an inducement to female decorum in the matter of dress, especially in the public congregation. The same consideration gives point and emphasis to a clause in Paul's solemn appeal to Timothy :—'I charge thee, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and *the elect angels*, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.'‡ It would thus seem to be one of the functions of angelic ministry, to exercise an inspection over the worship, and sufferings, and obedience of the saints, that they may be ready to yield them assistance when required, be prepared to carry tidings respecting them to the company of interested fellow-spirits on high, and be qualified to bear witness in their behalf at the last day.

Holy angels, under the Mediator, are employed in making suggestions to the people of God. The following passage may perhaps warrant the idea that they performed an important part in communicating to the sacred writers the matter of the scriptures :—'The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass, and he sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John.'‖ But, however this may be, now that suggestion of this extraordinary kind is at an end, it is interesting to think that they may still be employed in directing the mind to duty and to comfort, and in calling up thoughts of a spiritual and improving character. The thing is at least possible. It is rendered even probable, by what we know of the power of bad spirits, in suggesting evil thoughts, imaginations, and desires. But the experiences of the people of God, respecting the sudden occurrence of ideas and states of feeling, whose origin cannot possibly be referred to the mind itself on any known laws of mental operation, would seem to give it a character of certainty. This cannot be understood as interfering with the work of the

* Eccl. v. 6. † 1 Cor. xi. 10. ‡ 1 Tim. v. 21. ‖ Rev. i. 1.

Divine Spirit, whose prerogative it is to guide into all truth; it only supposes him to work by means, the means in such cases being created spirits, while the sole efficient agency is reserved exclusively to himself. It may be difficult, or impossible, to discriminate between the suggestions of the mind itself and those of angelic ministers; but the difficulty is not greater here than in the case of the workings of evil spirits; and, in neither case, does the difficulty in question militate in the least against the fact.

Protection is afforded to the saints by holy angels. 'There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.'* Agreeably to this general statement, we find them employed in delivering Lot and his family from the destruction of Sodom:—'And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife and thy two daughters which are here, lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.'† Daniel's safety from the lions is another instance:—'My God,' says the prophet, 'hath *sent his angel*, and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me.'‡ If we may judge from what occurred in the case of the Saviour himself, at the time of his being tempted by Satan, when angels came and ministered unto him, we may conclude that the protection they afford extends to spiritual as well as outward dangers. Nor is it irrelevant here to observe the services they discharge, in the way of counteracting the plots of the church's enemies, and inflicting upon them the judgments of the Lord, inasmuch as these are connected with the safety of his people. Thus, with respect to Sennacherib's army, it is said:—'And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred fourscore and five thousand: and when they arose early in the morning they were all dead corpses.'‖

Holy angels, under the Messiah, exercise a salutary vigilance over the people of God. They are employed in frequent embassies of mercy to them while they live. When they die, they carry their disembodied spirits to the regions

* Ps. xci. 10—12. † Gen. xix. 15. ‡ Dan. vi. 22.
‖ 2 Kings xix, 35. See also Zech. i. 8—11. Dan. x. 13; xi. 1.

of bliss:—'The beggar died, and was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom.' And have we not reason to think that even their bodies will be taken in charge by the same powerful servants at the period of the resurrection? 'He shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.'

Such are some of the services performed by the angelic tribes to the members of the church of Christ. The wide space betwixt heaven and earth is not, as we are apt to imagine, an unoccupied void, but crowded with a busy throng of active beings employed in ministering to them who are to be heirs of salvation. And who is the master of these servants? By whom are they 'sent forth?' From whom do they derive their commission, but from Him whose mediatorial kingdom ruleth over all; who has removed the moral barrier which sin interposed to obstruct the intercourse of men and angels; who hath 'gathered together in one, all things, both which are in heaven, and which are in earth,' and thus opened the way for our being introduced to 'an innumerable company of angels?' Had he not assumed the character and discharged the functions of Mediator, none of the benefits conveyed through the medium of angels, could ever have been enjoyed by the people of God; nor could men ever have undergone that transformation and elevation of moral character which are necessary to fit them for intercourse with such pure and dignified creatures.

Important purposes are served by the subjection of angels to the Messiah. An opportunity is thus given, and a foundation laid, as we have seen, for the restoration of a useful, happy, honourable, and lasting friendship betwixt men and these celestial spirits. The whole honour and glory of man's salvation are thus secured to Christ, no service being performed to the saints, no benefit being received by them, but which emanates, be the instruments who they may, from the sacred fountain of his authority and love. Had the angels not been put under his feet, the services they perform, supposing them to have taken place, must have been independent of him, and consequently believers should have had a class of precious benefits for which they were under no obligation to Christ, and the glory of which they could never have ascribed to him. In this way, also, provision

is made for a high example of obedient subjection to Messiah being set before saints; as well as for the overthrow of evil spirits by beings of their own order, which cannot fail to contribute to the completeness of their defeat by increasing their torment and mortification.

And this leads us to remark, that fallen angels, as well as those who kept their first estate, are placed under the Messiah. He possesses power over infernal spirits, not only as God but as Mediator. The very object of his mediatorial character requires this; for, as the elect of God are, by nature, subjected to the power of Satan, and exposed to the assaults of his emissaries, it is important and necessary that He, who is to act as their Saviour should be invested with power to rescue them from their spiritual adversaries. That he may bind the 'strong man,' and spoil him of his goods, by delivering those whom he has led captive at his will, he must have a right to enter his house and place him in fetters. The god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, worketh in the children of disobedience; and He who is to restore them to the love and practise of holiness, must have power to cast out the prince of this world. Even after the children of God are rescued from the yoke of Satan's dominion, they are still liable to be assailed and subjected to partial and temporary bondage. Either on the one hand to protect his people from such assaults, or on the other to render them subservient to good, it is necessary that the devil and his angels be placed under the control of the Mediator. It is here not a little interesting to observe, that the very first announcement given of the Saviour exhibits him as the conqueror of the prince of the bottomless pit—*the seed of the woman bruising the* SERPENT'S *head.* Such was the object contemplated in his advent. 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.'* When the saints are exhorted to 'be sober, be vigilant, because their adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour,'† to whom but to their divine Mediator can they look for wisdom and strength, to resist his attacks and continue steadfast in the faith? When the devil is permitted to cast them into prison, that they may be

* 1 John iii. 8. † 1 Pet. v. 8.

tried, He only can enable them to 'be faithful unto death, that they may receive a crown of life.'* Nor is this extent of mediatorial power necessary for the individual members of his mystical body alone, but also for his church in her collective character. As for those systems of iniquity, religious and civil, with which she has to contend, we are assured that 'the dragon gave them their power and their authority;' and, of course, without some such control as we are supposing, things could never be so ordered as to bring about the issue which is predicted. 'And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before God day and night.'† Nay, these infernal agents, it would seem, are employed by the Mediator as instruments of inflicting merited punishment on the enemies of the church; but this they could not be, unless under his dominion. 'Wo to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet: for they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.'‡ Thus the church's salvation, safety, peace, and prosperity, require that her Head be possessed of a rightful dominion over fallen spirits of every order.

This branch of his official rule is not less fully illustrated in the history of the Redeemer's life, and death, and mediatorial government, than is his dominion over holy angels. His miracles filled the infernal spirits with dread, and extorted from them a deprecation of the exercise of his power: 'Art thou come to torment us before the time?§ By his personal conflict with Satan in the wilderness, the archfiend of hell was subjected to the mortification of a three-

* Rev. ii. 10. † Rev. xii. 9, 10.
‡ Rev. xii. 12; xvi. 13, 14. § Mat. viii. 28.

fold defeat. Such was the influence exerted by his ministers, that 'even the devils were subject to them through his name;' and, as they proceeded in their work of mercy and benevolence, 'Satan was beheld falling as lightning from heaven.'* But his death, his vicarious and meritorious death, was what shook the foundations of Satan' skingdom, and gave the fatal blow to the reign of the god of this world: 'Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross.'†

The power possessed by the devil and his angels over the human race, may be regarded in two lights—either as an unrighteous usurpation, or as a judicial calamity. As regards Satan himself, the former is the view we are to take of it; as regards the overruling providence of God, the latter is the light in which it is to be contemplated. Satan is a usurper; he possesses no lawful authority; as far as he himself is concerned, he can point to no authority from God for the exercise of his wicked and malicious control over man. Yet, notwithstanding this, it is obvious that without the permission of God, he could have no such control for a single moment, as that which he actually exercises. He could have no power unless, in this sense, it were given him from above.‡ Nor can we suppose that a righteous God would even permit him to have such power, unless for the punishment of those who have violated his law and exposed themselves to his judicial displeasure. Satan, in himself, has, indeed, no legal right to inflict torment on men; he has no direct moral authority from the Supreme Governor, to execute the threatening of his holy law against transgressors; he holds no such place as even that of the *authorized executioner* of the divine vengeance: yet his wrath and malice are, as in the case of wicked men, made to praise God, by being over-ruled for the punishment of the guilty violaters of his law.

In this sense it is the guilt of men which gives Satan power. His dominion, usurped though it be on his part, springs from human transgression. But for this, the righteous Lord who doeth righteousness, would never have tolerated, for an instant, the unrighteous usurpation of the prince of this world. This being understood, it must be

* Luke x. 17, 18. † Col. ii. 15. ‡ John xix. 11.

obvious that the overthrow of Satan's power, required, first of all, that legal satisfaction should be given to the claims of the divine law for the sins of men. This done, his throne is undermined—his sceptre broken—his arm of might paralyzed; and any efforts he can ever afterwards make, are but the feeble attempts of a vanquished foe to recover his lost influence, or the spiteful manifestations of unsubdued but impotent malice. Now this is just what was done by the death of Christ; and we have here an illustrious display of the inseparable connexion subsisting betwixt his regal and sacerdotal offices. It was in his *cross* that he triumphed over the principalities and powers of darkness. It was here that he bruised the serpent's head. All legal ground for permitting him to continue to exercise his lawless usurpation being at an end, the triumphant Saviour could exert his power in destroying Satan's influence over the chosen of God. From this point, then, does the victorious Mediator go forth, on his glorious undertaking of destroying the works of the devil. The death of the cross effected, he is prepared to enter the territories of the prince of darkness; to overthrow his dominion in the hearts of men, and the institutions of society; to rescue his own children from the fangs of the destroyer; to bind and loose Satan at his pleasure; and to order every thing so as best to bring about the period, when 'the devil shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,'* and when 'he who has the keys of hell and of death, who openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteh and no man openeth,' shall so hold him in eternal durance, that he shall not torment his people any more.

A middle place, betwixt inanimate creation and angelic intelligences, is occupied by *men;* and they also are under the government of the mediatorial King. 'The Father has given him power over ALL FLESH.'†—a phrase which in this, as in other parts of scripture,‡ signifies the whole of mankind, the human race at large. That he possesses authority over the righteous, the elect, those whom the Father has given to him, cannot for a moment be doubted. But that his power, as Mediator, should extend to the non-elect, the ungodly, the world lying in wickedness, may not seem so obvious. A little reflection, however, is all that is re-

* Rev. xx. 10. † John xvii. 2. ‡ Luke iii. 6, &c.

quired to produce conviction on this point also. Those who are given to him, are mingled up for a time with the rest of the human family; they are themselves, at first, ungodly and unrighteous; and, that they may be changed, as well as gathered out from a sinful and apostate race, he, whose work it is to accomplish these objects, must have power over the wicked as such. Nay, the ungodly may often be rendered instrumental in contributing to the interests of the church and people of God. The earth helps the woman, as Egypt supplied the children of Israel with support during the years of famine, and as Cyrus assisted the Jews in their return to their own land and the rebuilding of their temple. The very enmity of the wicked may be over-ruled for the good of the righteous. Now, it is Christ who, in virtue of his mediatorial power, thus establishes the wicked for correction, and makes the wrath of men to praise him. Even to restrain and keep back what would not be for the good of his chosen, the Redeemer must be possessed of such power. And, in addition to all these reasons, his power must be thus extensive, for the purpose of inflicting on the ungodly the punishment due to their sins. As the Father hath committed all judgment to the Son, it is his to 'make his enemies his footstool,' and to put into the hand of them that afflict his people 'the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of his fury.'* On all these accounts there can be no greater mistake than to limit the Mediator's power to the members of the church, or to exclude any class of men whatever from his authority. Enemies as well as friends are put under his feet:—'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.'† Heathens as well as Christians are subject to his authority:—'The heathen are given to him for his inheritance;' 'He is head of the heathen.'‡ Persons, in their civil as well as their ecclesiastical capacity, are required to acknowledge his power:—'Be wise, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way.'‖ The dead, not less than the living, are under his control:—'For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and

* Is. li. 22, 23.
† Ps. cx, 2.
‖ Ps. ii. 10—12.
‡ Ps. ii. 8; xviii. 43.

living.'* The wretched inhabitants of the pit, as much as those who are in heaven, feel his sway :—'He has the keys of hell and of death ; he openeth and no man shutteth ; and shutteth, and no man openeth.'† Thus does it appear, that, among the human family, with all its numbers, not one is exempted from the government of Prince Messiah ; none so high as to be beyond his reach, none so low as to be beneath his notice. He has power, indeed, over all flesh.

Nor is it over men as individuals merely that Christ possesses power. His authority extends to *associations* of every description, domestic, civil, and ecclesiastical. A tendency to association is deeply lodged in the constitution of man, and makes its appearance in a thousand varied forms. Individuals, by forming themselves into societies, may make themselves powerful for good or evil, for purposes of aggression or defence. Societies, like persons, are under the government of God, and subject to the divine law. As bodies politic or corporations, they are to be regarded in the light of large moral subjects. To suppose that men, as individuals, are under the moral government of the Almighty, and bound to regulate their conduct by his law, but that, as societies, they are exempted from all such control, is to maintain what involves the most absurd and pernicious consequences. According to this view, those who wish to free themselves from the restraints of moral obligation, have only to enter into alliance with one another :—they have only to band themselves together, to have their proud wish of independence fully gratified. This conclusion is too glaringly impious, not to shock every reflective mind. But if associations are under the moral government of God, and God has committed all government to the Son, it follows that associations are as much under the mediatorial sovereignty as individuals. Indeed it would not be difficult to show, that no species of society can exist whose proceedings do not bear more or less directly on the interests of the Redeemer, so that, without having such under his control, he could not fully accomplish the ends for which he is invested with the mediatorial character. While this is true of all associations, there are two, the church and the state, over which the mediatorial authority in a very particular manner extends. These are so important, both in them-

* Rom. xiv. 9. † Rev. i. 18 ; iii. 7.

selves and in their relation to the subject now under discussion, that we must devote to each a separate section.

But before leaving the present department, it is proper to remark, that all the *dispensations of providence*, as well as the various departments of creation, are under the dominion of the Mediator. It embraces men, not only in all their characters, but in all their concerns, in all their affairs, and in all the vicissitudes that can befall them. This is proved, not only by the universal language to which we have before adverted as employed by the inspired writers when speaking of Christ's rule, but by the express terms of scripture with reference to this subject, and also by the necessity of the thing itself. The vision of the wheels, in the first chapter of Ezekiel's prophecy, is generally understood to refer to the dispensations of divine providence in their nature, aspects, intricacy, and perfect consistency and wisdom. These dispensations were represented to the prophet as under the direction of one who sat upon a throne, and whose likeness was as 'the appearance of A MAN above upon it.'* We are not left to doubt that 'the man Christ Jesus' is here meant; for it is afterwards said, 'This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of THE LORD.' We have here, then, an explicit proof from scripture that the affairs of providence are managed by the Mediator; managed too with perfect wisdom, and with special reference to the covenant of grace, as indicated by the rings of the wheels being 'full of eyes round about, and by the appearance of the brightness being 'as the day of rain.' Indeed the necessity of the thing requires that the Mediator's power be of such extent as to embrace all the affairs of providence. How, else, could he remove those obstacles which prevent the success of his gospel, and make way for the advancement of his spiritual kingdom? How, but for this, in a world in which 'there are many adversaries,' could 'a great door and effectual be opened up' to his servants in furthering his cause? How, without this, would it be possible to render the train of events in operation at any time, subservient to the interests of the church? How could things merely secular, such as learning, and wealth, and the common relations of life, be ever Christianized, or have inscribed on them the motto *Holiness to the Lord?* Or how could the whole scheme of

* Ezek. i. 26.

providential concerns be brought to that glorious consummation at the final judgment, to which it is his prerogative to bring it, seeing 'the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son?' It is *his*, in short, to open the seven-sealed book—to blow the seven trumpets—and to pour out the seven phials, in which all the events of divine providence toward the church, and her enemies, are comprehended. The means of providence are best studied in the light of Calvary; and there is no surer key to the interpretation of the apocalyptic symbols than the cross.

Such is the varied proof, to which we invite attention, on the subject of the universal extent of the Mediatorial rule. It embraces every thing animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, moral and immoral, individual and social;—every thing, in short, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. All things are put under his feet. He only is excepted who did put all things under him. To such an extent of Mediatorial power, however, several objections have been started, which it is but fair to state, and which it is dutiful to consider.

One of these objections, founded on the spirituality of Christ's kingdom, has already been obviated. But, it may be said that such an extent of dominion as we have supposed to belong to the Son as Mediator, tends to exclude the Father and the Holy Spirit from the government of all things. By no means. However mysterious in itself and difficult to be explained, the fact is not to be denied that the work of one person of the Godhead, in any department of operation, does not preclude that of the others; creation, providence, and grace, being alike ascribed in Scripture to each. The inspired writers represent the Father and the Son, accordingly, as occupying the same throne:—'Even as I am set down with my Father in his throne,'—'the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it.'* Nor can it fail to strike an intelligent person that the very same mode of reasoning might be directed against the Saviour's dominion over the church. If the circumstances of the government of *the world* at large being vested in the Son goes to exclude the Father and the Spirit from the dominion of all things, it will follow that the circumstance of the dominion of the *church* being vested in the Son, must, on the same principle, go to exclude the Father and the Spirit from all control

* Rev. iii. 21; xii. 3.

over the covenant society. And, if the management of the church may be delegated to the Son without interfering with the essential right of dominion belonging to the other persons of the Trinity, why not also the management of all things besides? If a part may be delegated without annulling the right of the other persons to dominion over that part, why may not the whole, without annulling their right of dominion over the whole?

It has also been supposed to confound the essential and the Mediatorial rule of Christ. In confirmation of, and in addition to, what was formerly observed on this point, it may here be remarked that there may be a formal distinction where there is a material identity. The same thing may be viewed in different aspects. Things, the same in themselves, may be viewed as under the dominion of Christ both essentially as God and officially as Mediator. In the latter case, they are invested with a new power, and directed to a new end. He is not only 'head over all things,' but 'head over all things to the church which is his body.' In the order of God's creatures, the lower are subordinate to the higher, and the highest include all that are under them. Things natural are subordinate to things moral, and things moral to things gracious; but the interests of those things which are gracious necessarily suppose the subordination both of those that are natural and those that are moral.—Thus the two latter classes, which are under the Son essentially considered, must, for the sake of the former class, which is under him officially, be placed under him officially too. The result of the whole, then, is that the essential and the Mediatorial dominions of Christ, so far from being subversive the one of the other, are absolutely commensurate and perfectly harmonious; yet not so blended as to destroy the distinctive character of either.

It has been thought an objection to the doctrine of this chapter that, if Christ be possessed of such an extent of official power, it must lay foundation for the ascription of divine honours to him as Mediator. He who rules over all is certainly entitled to the homage of all. But, so far from being desirous that divine honours should not be paid to Christ as Mediator, we are at a loss to see how this can be avoided, or to what evil it can possibly give rise. His divine and his mediatorial characters are, it is true, distinct. That is to say, we can suppose the former without the latter. But it is

carefully to be observed that we cannot suppose the latter without the former. His divinity is essential to his mediatorship. He could not have been Mediator unless he had been God. He is a Divine Mediator. Apart from his divinity, his mediatorial character is not only without validity, but without being,—a mere figment of imagination.—Where, then, lies the danger of ascribing divine honours to the Mediator? Was it not as Mediator that the disciples, in the days of his flesh, fell down and worshipped him? Is it not as the Lamb slain, that every creature in heaven is represented as ascribing to him blessing, and honour, and glory, and power? And might not the payment of divine honours to any one of the persons of the Godhead, viewed as *Creator* or *Preserver*, be as reasonably objected to, as the ascription of divine glory to the Son as *Mediator?* The former characters are not more essential to the being of God than the latter; or rather they are all alike non-essential. God might have existed without assuming the character of Creator or Preserver, as well as the Son without taking to himself that of Mediator. This last is not more the result of an act of divine will than the others; and if these, as is admitted, do not preclude but call for divine homage, why should not this?

It is equally inconclusive to maintain, that such an extent of mediatorial dominion must suppose the wicked to be somehow interested in the work of Christ, and partakers of the benefits of his death. We appeal, in reply, to what is matter of fact; we have already shown, that there are many things under the power of Christ besides those which are the immediate objects of his purchase. Angels, devils, reprobate men, and things irrational and inanimate, are all put under the feet of the Mediator: yet not one of these can be said to have been redeemed by his blood.—There are some benefits enjoyed by the wicked of the world, which, as they result from the mediatorial economy, may be said to be, indirectly at least, the fruits of Christ's death. Such is the case with the divine forbearance, temporal favours, and the outward dispensation of gospel ordinances of which the wicked partake, but which, but for the scheme of salvation, they could never have enjoyed. It is, however, not more difficult to account for such things, than to understand how a general reprieve, and temporary support, may be conferred by an earthly prince on a whole body of

traitors, for the sake of some whom it is his design to rescue from the danger that impends them all. 'And the Lord said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.' 'Thus saith the Lord, as the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not, for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants' sakes, that I may not destroy them all.'* Nor is it irrelevant, here, to advert to the distinction betwixt things viewed simply in themselves, and viewed as blessed by God. The things themselves may be enjoyed when the blessing of heaven is withheld. In the case of temporal benefits, it is the blessing that springs, properly speaking, directly from the mediation of Christ; the things themselves spring from it only indirectly. Things which flow from the natural goodness of God, it will be allowed, were forfeited by sin; and, if so, they can be restored only through the Mediator. It is commanded, 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' We are instructed to pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' It is said of the believer, 'Bread shall be given him, his water shall be sure.' We are also assured that 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.'† Now, it may be asked, to which covenant, the covenant of works or that of grace, do these promises and assurances respecting temporal mercies belong? Not surely to the covenant of works, for, through this medium, no good can come to fallen man; the curse is all that he can receive from this source. But if they belong to the covenant of grace, they must have some connexion with the death of Christ, by which this covenant is ratified. And if the things, viewed in themselves, flow, as we admit, from the natural goodness of God, and so may be participated in by more than the saints; yet, viewed as blessed by God, that is, as real blessings, must they not be regarded as flowing from the blood of Christ, by which they are secured, redeemed, and sanctified, for the use of his own people? Nor can it be any more a valid objection to Christ's headship

* Gen. xviii. 23; Is. lxv. 8.
† Matt. vi. 25, 33; vi. 11; Is. xxxiii. 16; 1 Tim. iv. 8.

over all things, that the wicked are thus supposed to enjoy temporal benefits, than it is to his headship over the church, that the wicked as well as others enjoy access to the ordinances of the gospel and the means of grace.

After all, it may be thought that the doctrine of Christ's universal dominion is at variance with fact. True, 'we see not yet all things put under him.' Devils and wicked men do not acknowledge his authority, or respond to his claims. But his *right* and *title* are unaffected by this circumstance. In the kingdom of a rightful sovereign, there may be many open and avowed rebels. If this objection were of weight against his dominion over all things, it would bear with equal force against his power over the church, inasmuch as, unquestionably, many of those who are included in this department, are yet unsubdued and in arms against his authority. Nay, it would go to exclude the Almighty himself from the government of the universe; for many, many there are who refuse to acknowledge or respect his rule. The reign of the Mediator, however, is not yet ended; in the exercise of the undoubted right he possesses, he is carrying forward the purposes for which it has been conferred. Let us only wait with patience, till he has put down all rule, and all authority and power, and then it shall appear that the Father hath put all things in subjection under his feet, having left nothing which is not put under him. How delightful the principle thus established and vindicated! It reflects the glory of Christ. It represents him as he on whose head are many crowns. He thus appears, wearing, not only the crown of dominion over the church, but that of dominion over the kingdoms of nature, providence, and grace—over things physical and moral, rational and irrational, animate and inanimate. Things in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, are thus seen to be put under his feet. His kingdom ruleth over all. Ye saints of the most High! ascribe to him the glory that is due. Be not afraid or ashamed to affirm his universal sovereignty. Who would wish to rob him of any one of his crowns, or to see him excluded from any part of his dominions? If some have seemed to do so theoretically, let us hope that is has arisen more from mistaken prejudice than from real opposition to his honour. Of such prejudice many are beginning to feel ashamed, and there are now symptoms of their returning to a more scriptural way

of thinking on this vital point; vital, we mean, as respects the honour and glory of the Saviour. It is not a mere speculative matter; it affects the very perfection of the Redeemer's character. So much so, that, without such extent of power as we have supposed, he could not be our Redeemer at all. To the salvation of men, he must be invested with power, not only over such as *are* saved, but over such as are *to be* saved, and possess a right to bring them under the influence of means, as well as to render the means efficacious:—a right to subordinate every thing in nature and providence to the accomplishment of this high and glorious undertaking. To limit or restrict the mediatorial rule is thus clearly subversive of the Saviour's glory. Let us tremble to entertain any opinion fraught with such a frightful tendency. No, O Emmanuel! we shall not be guilty thus of tarnishing the honour of thy glorious name. We rejoice in thy boundless dominion, and unhesitatingly proclaim thee LORD OF ALL!

This view of things is fully fraught with comfort to the saints of God. To such it cannot but afford strong consolation, to know that their Mediator has power over angels, and can employ these celestial beings in watching over them, communicating to them ideas, affording them protection, and transporting them, when they die, to the land of bliss. When assailed by Satanic temptations, it must be matter of joyful reflection to the people of God, to know that Christ has dominion over infernal spirits, and can limit and restrain, and overrule for good, all their operations; that they can have no power over these except as it is given them by him; that the power they possess is entirely under his control; and that he possesses the right and the ability, as he stands pledged, to destoy in the end all the works of the devil. As the disciple of Christ looks abroad upon the field of nature, how pleasing the reflection, that it is his Saviour who upholds all things by the word of his power, causing the sun to shine, the stars to twinkle, the rain to fall, the earth to vegetate, and food to spring from it for man and beast! Every thing in nature is thus invested with a new beauty, and reflects a brighter splendour to the eye of the Christian from being placed under the management of his Lord and Saviour. As the wheels of providence revolve, however high their bearing and intricate their movements, he can behold them with perfect calmness

and security, knowing, as he does, that they are all under the infallible guidance of the God-man Mediator, who occupies the throne which is above the firmament. In short, in whatever situation he may be placed, or whatever view of things he may be led to take, nothing can afford to the believer greater consolation and joy, than the reflection that all are under the power of him who is the Saviour of his soul.

Not less calculated is the subject we are considering, to appal the hearts of the enemies of Christ. In virtue of his universal dominion, he can break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. His Father has said to him, 'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.' To such as are in a state of rebellion against him, it may well be said, 'Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.' He has at his command infinite resources of torture, and dismay, and ruin. You who are his enemies! think how he can send out your fellow-rebels against you; can scourge you with providential calamities; or let loose legions of infernal spirits to torment and devour you. Think how he swept away the Antediluvians with the flood; how he drowned the Egyptians in the waters of the Red Sea; how he overthrew in succession the heathen monarchies; and how he poured destruction on the guilty inhabitants of Judea. As Lord of all, he can make all things the instruments of his vengeance upon you. Be persuaded to lay aside your enmity. Throw from you forever the weapons of your rebellion. He must reign till all his enemies be made his footstool. How much better, by timely submission, to be elevated to his throne, than, by obstinate hostility, to be trodden forever under his feet! The one or the other must be the result. You have before you the alternative. Choose ye that which is good. He extends to you now the golden sceptre of his grace. Come to him, that, by the rod of his strength sent out of Zion, you may be made willing in the day of his power. Pray him to subdue your enmity, and set up his throne in your hearts. Seek that he may work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Tremble at the thought of being exposed eternally to 'the wrath of the Lamb.' The decree has not yet gone forth, 'Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me!' Oh! no. Blessed be God, this sentence hasnot yet

passed upon you. Improve your privilege. Come forward and swear allegiance to Him who is 'Lord of all.' Cast your crowns at his feet, and stand prepared to exclaim, forever and ever, 'Alleluia! the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!'

CHAPTER VII.

MEDIATORIAL DOMINION OVER THE CHURCH.

We have seen that the mediatorial rule is strictly universal. It comprehends under it all things, without a single exception. We remarked that among the 'all things' are included associations of every description, domestic, civil, and ecclesiastical. It was also observed, that there are two associations, which, both from their importance in themselves, and their particular relation to the subject in hand, deserve a separate and more full consideration. The first of these is THE CHURCH, without doubt the most important society in existenc, and that in subserviency to whose interest it is that the Mediator has been invested with power over every other thing. He is Head over *all things to the church* which is his body.

The fact of Christ's mediatorial rule over the church is plainly testified in the scriptures. He is 'king upon the holy hill of Zion,—king of Zion—he reigns over the house of Jacob for ever—the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church—he is the head of the body the church—Moses was faithful in all his house as a servant, but Christ as a son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.' They 'who sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb,' address him, besides other titles, by that of 'King of Saints.'*

* Prov. ii. 6 ; Zech. ix. 9 ; Luke i. 33 ; Eph. v. 23 ; Col. i. 18 ; Heb. iii. 6 ; Rev. xv. 3.

The term *church* is a familiar one. It is in the mouths of all. It is of importance that we attach to it some definite idea. The Hebrew word קָהָל, and the Greek word ἐκκλησια, which are used by the inspired writers to denote the church, signify an assembly convened by invitation or appointment, being derived from verbs the generic idea of which is *to call*. The nature of the assembly, whether civil or religious, must be determined by the context. In the New Testament the word translated church, when used in a religious sense, is applied :—to the whole body of the elect, as when Christ is said to 'love the church ;'—to a small association of private Christians, as when we read of the church in the houses of certain individuals ;—to a regularly organized congregation, as when 'the church of Ephesus,' 'the church of Smyrna,' or such like is spoken of ; and to the whole visible Catholic society, consisting of all, who, in every age, and in every place, make a credible profession of true religion, together with their children, as when 'the church in the wilderness' is spoken of, or when the Lord is said to 'add daily to the church such as shall be saved.' The first and the last of these views are of the greatest importance. In allusion to these it is that the church is commonly spoken of as visible and invisible—the latter epithet referring to the first of the senses above enumerated, the former to the last. 'The Catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be, gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof ; and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. The visible church, which is also Catholic or universal under the gospel, (not confined to one nation as before under the law) consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children ; and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.'* Both of these views are comprehended, of course, in the one church of which Christ is the Head, and over which he exercises mediatorial rule. But it is the visible church with which we are at present chiefly concerned, and of which we are to be understood as principally speaking in the sequel. This comprehends many, we might almost say all, of the real

* Westminster Confession, chap. xxv. sect. 1 and 2.

saints of God who are upon earth, inasmuch as true grace in the heart prompts men to make an open profession of the name of Christ before the world. It does not, of course, include all the saints who are in existence, as many of these are in glory, of the mediatorial rule over whom we shall have occasion afterwards to speak, and it may also include some who are not true members of Christ's mystical body. It is, nevertheless, a most interesting view of the church of Christ, the existence, and structure, and privileges of which are necessarily and most intimately connected with the best interests of the strictly spiritual kingdom of the Messiah. In what follows in this chapter, therefore, we would be understood as having a principal regard to *the visible church Catholic, consisting of all, who, in every age and in every place, make a credible profession of true religion, together with their children;* while we would not be understood as overlooking that invisible church, for the promotion of whose interests alone it is, that this was ever brought into being or organized.

That the term *church* occurs in this sense in scripture has been denied by some, whose peculiar views of ecclesiastical government require them to understand it, either in the sense of the whole chosen of God, or in that of a particular congregation assembling for worship in one place. But the word occurs in passages in which it can be understood in neither of these senses. Speaking of Moses, Stephen says in his address:—'This is he that was with the church in the wilderness.'* The church here means the Jewish church. It cannot be supposed that all who were comprehended in that church were elect persons, much less that it comprehended all the elect. Nor did the members of that church meet all in one congregation; there were many congregations of Israelites scattered throughout the land of Judea. Again, Peter says:—'The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.'† The church here cannot mean the whole body of the elect, for to such there is no addition, it is complete from eternity: neither can it mean a single congregation, as the increase of the church was not confined to one town or district. When it is said, 'Saul made havoc of the church, entering into every house,'‡ the elect cannot possibly be meant, as the most

* Acts vii. 38. † Acts ii. 47. ‡ Acts viii. 3.

lynx-eyed persecutor cannot distinguish such from hypocrites; and it is surely not reasonable to suppose that the zeal of such an enemy as Saul of Tarsus would be confined to one congregation. Paul says:—'Gaius mine host, and of the whole church.'* Gaius' hospitality could not be exercised only to the elect, as he did not know who were such; nor is it at all probable that a person of such distinguished liberality would confine his attentions to a single congregation. Besides, it is written:—'God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets, &c.'† It is not over the church of the elect, but over the visible church, that God has appointed visible office-bearers: nor are these functionaries restricted to one congregation. These are a few of the passages in which the term 'church' cannot be understood in either of the senses supposed, and in which it is not easy to see what other sense can be attached to it than that of which we are speaking, namely, the visible church catholic. This, indeed, is the meaning it bears in the common language of Christians. When they speak, for example, of 'the church,'—of the faith of the church, the worship of the church, the sufferings of the church, the progress of the church, or the triumphs of the church,—such is the import of the term.

SECTION I.

Now, this church, the visible church catholic, owes its existence to Christ's mediatorial authority.

Without the work of Christ, agreed upon in the eternal counsels, the church could never have had a being. Its entire structure, privileges, and ends, rest on what he did. But for his engagement from eternity, it is impossible to see how such a society as the Church of God could ever have existed. Nor is this all. The church owes its existence to the creative authority of the Redeemer. It is not a self-existent, self-constituted association merely, formed by voluntary agreement or mutual compact among its members, with reference even to the work of the Son of God. It is

* Rom. xvi. 23. † 1 Cor. xii. 28.

expressly founded by the voluntary and authoritative appointment of the Redeemer himself.

The existence of the visible church may be traced as far back as to Eden, when the primitive ordinances of social worship were instituted, and the blessings of grace began, through them, to be dispensed to our fallen progenitors.

It is true, there are several distinct periods of the church's existence, which have been marked by something peculiar to themselves. In a popular, but improper sense, we speak of the Patriarchal, the Levitical, and the Christian churches. These, however, correctly speaking, are but different states of the same church. The church, the spouse of Christ, is one and the same in every age. God has had but one church in the world, and that church has existed since the revelation of the seed of the woman at the fall of man.—There have been, as above hinted, different periods, when, after suffering declension, it has undergone, so to speak, a sort of re-organization: and, on these occasions, as well as at its formation in the beginning, we find the interposition of the Mediator. When, at first, Adam and Eve united in the act of offering sacrifice, connected with prayer and praise, the visible church catholic was formed, and we cannot doubt that it owed its being to 'the Voice of the Lord God,' who was heard in the garden at the cool of the day, calling the attention of the guilty pair to their destitute and sinful state, and to the way by which fallen men were to be rescued from the curse and condemnation of a broken law. The covenant made with Abraham, long afterwards, marks another interesting period. It was without doubt an ecclesiastical covenant, in which the visible church in general was interested. This appears from the fact, that, while some of the patriarch's natural posterity were shut out from its blessings, express provision was made for the admission of others who were not his seed; and from the promise of being made 'the father of many nations,' which could not have been fulfilled if the covenant had had respect only to the one nation of the Jews. It is not unreasonable, therefore, to suppose that he who proclaimed this covenant to the patriarch, was no other than the angel of Jehovah, the uncreated Messenger of the covenant; for that covenant, we know, 'was confirmed of God in Christ.'* With regard

* Gal. iii. 17.

to the solemn and awful transactions at Sinai, when the whole Levitical economy was fixed and arranged, we are assured that the law was 'ordained by angels in the hands of a Mediator.'* At the introduction of the New Testament dispensation—that dispensation which is to continue to the end of time—we are assured that the Lord Jesus Christ himself administered ordinances, authorized and sent forth ministers, countenanced with his presence the social meetings of the church, and, on the day of Pentecost, shed abundantly on his assembled disciples the influences of his Spirit. Whatever, then, may be the period at which the origin of the church is fixed, it will be found that it owed its existence to Christ.

What, it may here be inquired, are the marks by which the visible church catholic, of which we are speaking, may be known? Not every one who makes a profession can claim to belong to this church. What then are the characteristics of the true church—the *notæ veræ ecclesiæ?* They are not those to which the Romish church pretends,—antiquity, universality, continued succession, the power of working miracles, and the like. It would be easy to show that all these are false, even as respects that very community, and that they are altogether spurious and unfounded as respects any denomination whatever. Antiquity, universality, &c., may be properties of the true church, but they are not *exclusive* properties. The characteristics of the visible church catholic are what belong to it, and to it *alone.* These are: soundness of doctrinal sentiment, a lawful and regular ministry, and the due administration of gospel ordinances. Whatever ecclesiastical society can lay claim to these, has a right to be regarded as a section of the visible church catholic; whatever cannot, has no right to be so regarded.

The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. The exhibition and maintenance of divine truth being one end of its existence, the adoption of gross error, whether with regard to the character of God, the person and offices of the Redeemer, the nature of Messiah's kingdom, the method of salvation, the character of Christian duty, or the doctrine of a future state, must prove fatal to the ecclesiastical character of any professing body. Gross heretics, of any de-

* Gal. iii. 19.

scription, have no right to be regarded as members of the visible church. 'Continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine,' is indispensable to such relationship. Whoever aspires to this honour, must 'have been taught as the truth is in Jesus;' nor must they make any such pretension 'who walk not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel.'

A small association of private Christians may be called, in some sense, a church; but to constitute the visible church, the existence of office-bearers would seem to be requisite. A legitimate ministry, therefore, is another mark of the true church. In order to this, the persons bearing office must be properly qualified, regularly called, and duly initiated. If, in any ordinary case, the individuals who officiate are such as have assumed the office of themselves, or have received only a call from the people without scriptural ordination, or are grossly deficient in ministerial qualifications, this circumstance would seem enough to damage the right to being regarded as a part of the visible church. The apostles 'ordained them elders in every church.' And if 'Christ glorified not himself to be made an high-priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to-day have I begotten thee,' no man surely ought to 'take this honour upon himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' 'How shall they preach except they be sent?' 'I sent them not, nor commanded them, therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.'* If the supply of ecclesiastical offices were left to spontaneous assumption, it must be obvious to every one that they would soon either die away altogether from apathy, or become so debased, by the corruption and inability of those who held them, as to be no longer capable of serving the end of their institution.

To the existence of the visible church there must be, farther, the due administration of gospel ordinances. Preaching, prayer, praise; baptism and the Lord's supper; discipline and government, must be regularly dispensed, that is, by persons properly authorized, and with a view to the purposes for which they were appointed. When the ordinances are either altogether awanting, as is the case in regard to some of them in certain professing bodies—or greatly corrupted, as is the case in others—or prostituted to other than their legitimate ends, as has been done by using them to

* Acts xiv. 23; Heb. v. 4, 5; Rom. x. 15; Jer. xxiii. 32.

qualify for civil offices, rather than to promote the salvation of the soul; the evidence that such as do so belong to the visible church catholic, must be viewed as impaired, if not altogether subverted.

SECTION II.

Christ's mediatorial rule over the church appears from his organizing it, incorporating it by covenant, and purchasing it with his blood.

The church possesses a character of visible organization. It is spoken of in scripture as 'a body,' the members of which exhibit admirable symmetry, nice adaptation, and wise subserviency one to another;—as a 'house,' all the parts of which are 'fitly framed together;'—as a 'city,' whose streets are distributed with regularity, and whose municipal regulations are calculated to secure the peace and order of the inhabitants;—as a 'kingdom,' and as a 'nation,' figures which suggest ideas of good government, orderly management, and proper subordination. Indeed, the nature of things and the necessity of the case require that the church be considered as a thoroughly organized society. Every society supposes, in its very structure, some kind of organization; and it is any thing but honourable to the Head of the church, to suppose that he has left its members to exist as a confused mass of detached individuals, living separately, without any bond of connexion or plan of co-operation. Very different, indeed, is the fact, as the character of the Mediator should have led us to infer, even had we not been told, as we are, that 'from him the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body, unto the edifying of itself in love.'*

The church thus organized, is incorporated by covenant. It is a covenant-society. Christ has made with his church an everlasting covenant. It is not merely founded on the

* Eph. iv. 16.

covenant of grace, but he has made with it an express ecclesiastical covenant. This federal deed was renewed, if not originally made, with the church, in the person of Abraham, the father of the faithful. The transaction is recorded, Gen. xvii. 1—14. This was neither a personal nor a domestic covenant. It had, properly speaking, in view, neither the personal salvation nor the domestic prosperity of the patriarch. The promise, 'I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee,' had respect to an ecclesiastical relation. Nor were they his lineal descendants that were meant by his 'seed;' for, on the one hand, there were several branches of his natural posterity who had neither part nor lot in the covenant, while, on the other hand, there was provision made for admission to its privileges on the part of strangers 'who were not of his seed' (ver. 12). Indeed, the circumstance that it constituted Abraham 'the father of *many* nations,' is decisive on this point, as his natural posterity formed only *one* nation, namely, the nation of the Jews. The same thing furnishes indubitable evidence, that the covenant in question had a respect to the visible church catholic in every age of its existence. Had not the church, whose interests are secured by this covenant, been something else than what is called the Jewish church, the part of the promise of which we are now speaking could never have been fulfilled; because, not till after the introduction of the New Testament dispensation, and the extension of gospel privileges to Gentile nations, could Abraham have become the father of more than the nation of the Jews. Besides, the scriptures furnish us with sufficient evidence to prove that the Abrahamic covenant was never abrogated, and consequently that it was made with that church which is to continue to the end of time. It was not annulled at the introduction of the Levitical dispensation, as the apostle strongly affirms, when arguing for the continuance of its promises: 'And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, *the law*, which was four hundred and thirty years after, *cannot disannul*, that it should make the promise of none effect.'* For the same reason, it could not be annulled at the introduction of the Christian economy, when the ceremonial ritual was abrogated. The apostle expressly argues the calling of the

* Gal. iii. 17.

Gentiles, after this period, from the existence and terms of the covenant with Abraham. 'That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ,' he maintains, that 'to Abraham and his seed were the promises made: not to seeds, as of many, but as of one (and to thy seed) which is Christ; whence he draws the legitimate and consoling inference, 'Ye are all one in Christ Jesus, and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.'* Indeed, to maintain, either that the Abrahamic covenant was not an ecclesiastical one, or that it was ever annulled, were tantamount to asserting that the church is now an uncovenanted society, in opposition to what both the character of its Founder and the tenor of prophecy regarding it would lead us to expect, and is an idea too gloomy ever to be entertained by any true lover of Zion.

Christ, as Mediator, secured his right of dominion over the church, by purchasing her with his blood. 'Feed,' said Paul to the Ephesian presbyters, 'feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.' The elect, the members of the invisible church, are all, we know, redeemed from sin and misery by the precious blood of Christ: but can the same be said of the visible catholic church, of which we are now speaking? With proper explanation, we think it may. We are aware that the saying of the apostle above cited, is commonly understood of the church of the elect—the invisible church. We are, however, inclined to take a different view. The church of God, of which Paul speaks, is that over which visible office-bearers are placed, and the members of which are the proper objects of those external functions which it pertains to such office-bearers to discharge. If it were the elect only whom ecclesiastical overseers were enjoined to feed, a knowledge of who are elect and who not, would require to be imparted to the ministers of religion; nay, persons of the most profligate character would thus have a claim to the highest privileges of the church, as it cannot be denied that many such are included among those who are chosen of God to eternal life. It is only a visible church that can be the object of visible institutions. The duties required of the Ephesian elders were visible duties: the church, therefore, which is the ob-

* Gal. iii. 14, 16, 28, 29.

ject of them, must be a visible church. But, whether the church of God which Paul speaks of as purchased with his blood, be the visible church or not, we say that the same affirmation may be made with regard to this church. The Mediator purchased the visible church catholic with his blood.

This he may be said to have done, inasmuch as the elect of God, who are in the visible church, were actually redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ. The visible church comprehends within its pale many of God's chosen ones; innumerable real saints belong to the covenant society on earth. Now, all such have redemption through the blood of Christ, and the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace. He has obtained eternal redemption for them. They are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. As embracing so many who are thus redeemed, may not the visible church be said to be purchased with Christ's blood?

Besides, all who are members of the visible church profess to be real saints, and ought to be such. None else have a strict and proper right to the privileges of Christ's house. Others, it is true, find admission to the visible covenant society. But, in imposing upon the office-bearers by a false and hypocritical profession, they are in no slight degree culpable, while, in making use of sacred things to which they have no right, they bring on themselves the additional guilt of sacrilege. Still, that all the members of the church ought to be true saints, is a position that will not be disputed. Now, it is not uncommon to affirm of individuals and societies, that they are what they ought to be, and what they profess to be. On this principle it is that the members of the primitive churches are addressed, in the inscriptions of the apostolical epistles, as *saints, called elect, chosen of God*, &c.; when it cannot but be supposed that in many, if not all of these churches, there were some who were only nominal Christians. The apostles knew, however, that real saints they ought all to have been, and they all professed to be; and, so long as there was nothing visible in their conduct to prove the contrary, they felt called upon to speak of them as really such. On the same principle, may not the visible church, though comprehending in it some who are not actually redeemed from guilt and corruption, be said to be purchased with Christ's blood? May we not be war-

ranted in speaking of it as being what, at all events, it ought to be, and what, but for the hypocrisy which the rulers of the church have not the power of detecting, it actually would be.

But, farther, the privileges of the visible church catholic are purchased and secured to its members by the blood of Christ. The church has many privileges peculiar to herself as a covenant society; such as the word and sacraments, fellowship, discipline, and government. They are all appointed, in infinite wisdom, for the gathering in and perfecting of God's chosen ones. They are dispensed on the footing of the covenant of grace, and could only be procured by the blood of Emmanuel. They come not to her by the law of nature; for, even supposing that the members of the church are under that law, these gospel privileges have no sort of connexion with it. They come not by the covenant of works; for men are incapable of meriting any thing by that covenant, and, supposing they were, nothing is now dispensed on this footing but the righteous judgments of the Almighty. This inference is thus plain and irresistible, that the privileges of the church come to its members on the footing of the covenant of grace, which is ratified and sealed by the blood of Christ. On this account may the visible church itself be said to be purchased with the Redeemer's blood.

SECTION III.

On the church, thus redeemed with his own blood, the divine Mediator has conferred a variety of most interesting and distinguishing properties.

It is a *spiritual* society; consisting of persons professedly separated from the world lying in wickedness, and called to the fellowship of God's own Son. Its head is spiritual: its ordinances and its institutions bear a spiritual character: and the purposes for which it exists are altogether of this nature. It may be supposed that spirituality is a property, not so much of the visible as of the invisible church. This, however, is quite a mistake. Not that every one belonging

to it possesses an essential spiritual character; far from it: but every member professes that such is his character; and the character of any society, as distinguished from others, must be taken from its object and bearing, and from what those who compose it profess themselves to be. As distinguished, then, from *civil* society, the visible church is spiritual, men having no claim on the enjoyment of its privileges in virtue of their rights and relations as members of the civil community. The power possessed by its office-bearers is exclusively spiritual power; the object of their jurisdiction is the consciences of men, and not their persons or their property, which belong to the jurisdiction of the magistrate. It is, in this respect, a kingdom which is not of this world.

The church of Christ is strictly *independent;* meaning by this term to designate a feature of its character, and not the form of its government. It is independent alike of human wisdom, human power, and human control. The Lord Jesus Christ is its alone judge, lawgiver, and king. 'One is your master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. Call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your Father, which is in heaven.'* No earthly power—be it king, pope, or prelate,—has a right to domineer over the church. It is composed of Christ's freemen, and is itself free from all outward control. The state may extend to it protection, and countenance, and pecuniary support, and friendly co-operation; but has no right to dictate its creed, to institute its laws, to appoint its ministers, or to interfere in any one way with either its constitution or its administration. Whether the civil power may and ought to form a friendly alliance with the church, is one thing; whether such an alliance is necessary to the church's existence, is altogether another thing. The former does not, by any means imply the latter. It may be the duty of the state to give the church all the advantages of a civil establishment, without such an establishment being essential to the church's existence. The church *has* existed without the countenance and support of the civil power. These are by no means necessary to its being. To maintain that they are, is pure and undisguised Erastianism;—a principle degrading to the honour of the church, and subversive of the very ends of its existence. Whatever may be said as to the duty of civil rulers, care

* Matt. xxiii. 8, 9,

must be taken to preserve sacred and untouched the blood-bought freedom and independence of Christ's covenant society. The highest and warmest patronage of the state is procured at too dear a price, if, in order to secure it, the church has to barter away the least portion of her liberties. Every attempt, then, to interfere with its independence, on the part of the civil power, must be regarded as an unhallowed invasion of the rights of the people, and a monstrous usurpation of the inalienable rights and prerogatives of the church's glorious Head. From such interferences have sprung some of the grossest corruptions and severest sufferings of the church; and they cannot be too jealously watched against, or too indignantly repelled.

However independent of man, the church is *under subjection to Christ.* He is the Head of the body, the church. The doctrines, which it is the duty of the church to believe and profess, are such as *he* taught. The ordinances to be observed are *his* institutions. The laws to be obeyed are *his* laws. The matter of faith; the form of worship; the line of conduct, are alike sanctioned by his authority. The ministers of religion, neither individually nor collectively, possess any legislative power. Their authority is wholly ministerial, and is subordinate to that of Christ. They are at best but servants, and whatever they do they are required to do in the name of their divine Lord and Master. Do they preach? Like Paul at Damascus, they must 'preach boldly in the name of Jesus.' Do they pray? They must do so, 'calling upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.' Do they baptize? Care must be taken that those to whom they administer the ordinance, like the Ephesians of old, be 'baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.' Do they inculcate duty? They must teach men to 'observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded.' Do they exercise discipline? They must proceed on the principle laid down by the apostle,—'In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my Spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one over to Satan, for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.'*

* Acts ix. 27; 1 Cor. i. 2; Acts xix. 5; Mat. xxviii. 20; 1 Cor. v. 4.

To Christ, and to Christ, alone, then, is the church in a state of subjection; and for the church to acknowledge any other authority were to act unfaithfully toward her Lord, as for any other to claim authority over her were daringly to invade the prerogatives of Jesus.

The church has received from the Mediator a character of visible *unity*. The spouse, the undefiled of Christ, is but one. The names by which it is designated carry in them the idea of unity. It is called a 'body' a 'house' or 'household;' a 'kingdom.' There may be many members in the body, but the body itself is one; there may be different individuals in the household, but the household itself is one; there may be many provinces and subjects in the kingdom, but the kingdom itself is one. 'Hence, says the apostle, There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called in hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. We, being many, are one bread and one body.'*

The religion, which is entrusted to the church, being designed for mankind at large, in proportion as this religion is diffused there arises a necessity that those who embrace it should meet in separate congregations, and form particular associations. While they were so few that they could conveniently meet in one place, they did so. But this was not long; and the individual congregations or separate meetings which sprung out of the necessity of the case, were no violation of the church's unity. It is important that all those individual churches which possess the marks formerly enumerated—doctrinal orthodoxy, a regular ministry, and the due administration of the ordinances of God's worship—be regarded as so many integral parts of a great whole; as so many members of one body; as so many individuals constituting one grand society; and so far as they have opportunities of meeting together, holding free and delightful fellowship with one another. Instead of indulging toward each other the jealousies of rivals, and each claiming for itself the exclusive name and privileges of *the church*, it becomes them to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Nor is it to be deemed enough, to effect this purpose, that there be a unity of interest in Christ the Head; and of love, and sympathy, and duty, among the members.

* Eph. iv. 4, 15; 1 Cor. x. 17.

The unity which depends on such grounds as these is invisible. The visible church must have a visible unity. This visible unity springs from its having one Head; from its making profession of a common faith; from its participating in the same ordinances of ecclesiastical fellowship; from its having one mode of conveying authority to its office-bearers; and from the nature of the government instituted for the preservation of its purity and peace. Let us illustrate these points a little.

The church must be one, as it has but one Head. 'Christ is *the head of the church.*' 'He is *the head of the body*, the church.' 'There is *one Lord.*' We no where read of *the heads of the churches.* It follows, either that each individual church has no head, or that the churches possess a character of visible unity under one common Head.

There is, besides, a common faith, by the profession of which the unity of the visible church is exhibited and preserved. There is 'one faith.' A profession of faith being a visible thing, is thus fitted to form a bond of visible unity. The doctrinal creed of all who belong to the visible church is substantially the same. A public acknowledgment of belief in the truths which compose the Christian system, not only constitutes the individual by whom it is made a member of the particular congregation with which he connects himself, but unites him with all throughout the world who hold the same sentiments. If he has been before a Pagan, or a Mahometan, or a Jew, the avowal in question, while it severs him distinctly from the community to which he formerly belonged, as surely connects him with that great community which is distinguished by the name of Christian.

The different societies of Christians are united in the participation of the same ordinances of ecclesiastical fellowship. There is 'one baptism' and 'one bread.' By being baptized with water in the name of Christ, a person is not merely admitted into the particular church from which he receives the ordinance, but is proclaimed a member of that great society consisting of all who have had the same common badge of initiation put upon them. And, by joining in the Lord's Supper in a particular church, the communicant holds fellowship with all who, in every place, by eating of the same bread and drinking of the same cup, unite in showing forth the Lord's death until he come. 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the com-

munion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.'*

The mode in which office-power in the church is conveyed, namely, by ordination, proceeds on the principle that the church is one. The call to exercise official authority proceeds from the people, but the *power* is uniformly represented in scripture as proceeding from those by whom that power was formerly possessed. Election and ordination are not to be confounded with one another. Whatever may be the theoretical sentiments of some, all the leading denominations of professing Christians recognize this distinction, in practice at least. Without sympathizing at all with such as rigidly stickle for the necessity of apostolical succession to the validity of office in the church, it must be admitted that, in all ordinary cases, the right of ordination lies with those who have been previously ordained. This is the general rule, from which, however, there may be exceptions. If ordination expresses the conveying of official power and authority, it must proceed from office-bearers and not from the people, as the people cannot convey what they do not possess. In this way the *oneness* of the church, in all places and in all ages, is marked and kept up. The particular society over whom the person is ordained, thus declares itself one with those societies over whom the persons ordaining preside, and the act of ordination is regarded as so constituting, on the part of the person ordained, a relation to the whole visible church, as to give validity to his official ministrations in any part of the world. 'In the same manner,' says Principal Hill, 'as every one who is baptized, becomes a member of the catholic church, so every one who is ordained by the laying on of the hands of the office-bearers of the church, becomes a minister of the church universal. He is invested with that character in a manner the most agreeable to the example and the directions contained in the New Testament; and by this investiture he receives authority to perform all the acts belonging to the character. He cannot perform these acts to the church universal, because it is nowhere assembled; and the separation of the church universal renders it

* 1. Cor. x. 16, 17.

expedient, that the place in which he is to perform them shall be marked out to him. But this designation of place is merely a matter of order, which is not essential to his character, which does not detract from the powers implied in his character, and which serves no other purpose than to specify the bounds in which the church universal, by the hands of whose ministers he received the power, requires that the power shall be exercised.' 'By ordination,' says the same learned and perspicuous writer, 'they become ministers of the church universal; for having been tried by a particular branch of the church, acting in the name of Jesus, and in virtue of the trust derived from him, they receive authority and a commission to perform all the acts, which belong to those who are called in scripture ambassadors, stewards, rulers and overseers....Whenever ordination is considered as the act of Jesus Christ, by his office-bearers constituting a minister of the church universal, the idea of one great society is preserved. The whole may be diversified in outward circumstances, but it does not cease to be a whole; for, from this principle there result subordination to superiors, which is essential to church government, and a bond of union amongst those who are so far removed in place as not to be amenable to the same earthly superior.' *

To these considerations, add the argument for its unity arising from the government of the church. If there were no bond of connexion among the individual congregations that exist, the government of each would of necessity be comprised within itself. In cases of controversy there could be no constitutional means of settlement, and in cases of injury or wrong, no legal mode of obtaining redress. To allay contention and restore peace it would often be necessary to resort to division. But the right of appeal, which at present we take for granted to be sanctioned by scripture, obviates this difficulty and furnishes an evidence of visible unity. The party making the appeal, and the party to whom the appeal is made, mutually recognize each other as members of one body, in whose wisdom they can confide, and to whose decision they are willing to bow.

Nearly allied to unity, and necessarily resulting from it, is another property of the church, namely, its *universality*

* Hill's Lectures, iii, 414—416.

or catholicity. By this we mean something different from what the church of Rome understands by the same term, when it puts forth the presumptuous and uncharitable claim to be regarded as the only visible church upon earth, into which all its inhabitants are bound to seek admission, and without the pale of which there is no salvation. We set up no claim of this kind in behalf of any one body of professing Christians, even the most pure. By the visible church being universal, we mean that it is not confined to any country, but, in the language of the Westminster divines, 'consists of all those *throughout the world* that profess the true religion.' It is not the church of England, nor the church of Scotland, nor the United Secession church, nor the Reformed Presbyterian church, any more than the church of Rome, which is entitled to lay claim to universality; but that great community, composed of all those who make a credible profession of true religion together with their children, which we have before described as constituting the visible church. Nor is this church called universal with reference to its actual diffusion, for it embraces but a small portion, comparatively, of the population of the globe, and there are even some regions where it is altogether unknown. But it is adapted to universal diffusion: its ministers are authorized, and even required to make known its doctrines and offer its privileges to men of every nation, kindred, and tongue: while the predictions of holy writ, and the grant made to Christ of the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, hold out to us, not merely the encouraging hope, but the confident assurance, that his church shall yet exhibit a character of actual universality: that its light shall yet beam over all lands, and that all that dwell on the face of the wide earth shall unite in the belief of the same truth, the worship of the same God, the enjoyment of the same salvation, and the practice of the same holy obedience.

The visible church catholic possesses a duration commensurate with time. It is a *perpetual* society. It has existed, without intermission, from the period of its formation to the present hour, and shall continue to exist, without interruption, to the end of time. Different dispensations, indeed, there have been, but, under them all, the same church; nor was there ever an instant when its being was

suspended. It existed from Adam to Moses, during the Patriarchal economy; and from Moses to Christ, during the Levitical economy; as from Christ to the end of the world it shall continue, during what is called the Christian economy. Nothing shall ever be able to effect a suspension, much less an annihilation of its existence. Christ has said, referring to himself, 'upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.' Not that the church may not degenerate. Both the purity of its doctrine, and the spirituality of its worship, may be greatly corrupted, and the number of its faithful adherents may be few. But it shall never become extinct. The Redeemer shall ever have a seed to serve him. 'The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless there shall be always a church on earth to worship God according to his will.'* In the days of Elijah, when he thought himself alone, the Lord had reserved to himself seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. During the middle ages, when the horrid corruptions of Popery seemed to have obliterated every vestige of true religion, there were found among the valleys of Piedmont, in Bohemia, Switzerland, and even Britain, some who professed the pure gospel of the Son of God, and practised the simple rites of spiritual worship,—a few names who had not defiled themselves with the abominations of the mother of harlots. The existence of a visible church, since the era of the Reformation, cannot be called in question. Christ's covenant society may yet have to encounter evil days; infidelity and heresy may yet attain an alarming degree of strength and prevalence; the witnesses for truth may yet be slain and lie for a while trampled upon in the streets: but the Lord shall never leave himself without a church; the head shall never be without a body; and the slain witnesses shall be raised again to carry forward, with fresh vigour, the gracious designs of the Redeemer. The highest point to which the impetuous and overflowing current of opposition can possibly rise, is to 'reach even unto the neck.' The floods of error and persecution can never reach the church's Head: and while the head is above water the body is safe.

* West. Conf. chap. xxv. § 5.

SECTION IV.

Christ exercises mediatorial rule over the church for the accomplishment of the most imporant ends.

Of course the grand ultimate end, contemplated in the existence of the church, is *the glory of God*. This is the end, indeed, of every thing that exists. 'The Lord hath made all things for himself.' Such being the case, it follows, of course, that this must be the object of so prominent and important a thing as the church. All the perfections of deity are in this way glorified; and glory is reflected on each of the persons of the Godhead: on the Father by whom the members of the church are chosen to eternal life, on the Son by whose blood they are redeemed, and on the Holy Spirit by whose influences they are renewed and sanctified. But it is the sovereign grace of God, as a covenant God, that is pre-eminently and peculiarly displayed by the church. Other views of his character are elsewhere exhibited; it is in this connexion alone that he is magnified and made known as a God of grace. The gracious purpose of God is recognized in the church's existence; the gracious authority of God, in the voluntary submission of men to its laws and institutions; and the gracious power, and exuberant goodness, and immaculate purity of God, in the qualifications of its members, in the exercise of its discipline, and in its prayers, praises, and other acts of worship. 'This people have I formed for myself; *they shall show forth my praise*.' 'Having predestinated us, unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ *to himself*, according to the good pleasure of his will, *to the praise of the glory of his grace*.' 'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people: that ye should *show forth the praises of him* who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.'*

But this great object is secured by the accomplishment of certain proximate ends, prominent among which stand *the exhibition and maintenance of divine truth*. Dvine truth, comprehending the true character of God, the true view of

* Is. xliii. 21; Eph. i. 5, 6; 1 Pet. ii. 9.

man, the true way of salvation, the true method of sanctification, and the true state of future glory, is a sacred deposit committed to the church. The church is entrusted with this awful charge, for the purpose at once of diffusion and preservation. Without the church, the truth could be neither extensively made known, nor safely kept from extinction. It is contained, to be sure, in the scriptures, but, without some such institution as the church, the word of God, would be sure to be overlooked by the great mass of mankind, and to fall a prey in the end to the wicked devices of those who are enemies to the truth as it is in Jesus. It is the duty and business of the church, both office-bearers and private members, to watch over the existence and interests of gospel truth, to keep it clear from the obscurations of error, to defend it from the assaults of foes who seek its destruction, and to hold it up bright and attractive to the notice and attention of all. To the Jews of old 'were committed the oracles of God,' and from them the precious custody has descended to the church in later times. All the members and ministers may be accounted as, in some sense, 'stewards of the mysteries of God,' and bound, according as every man hath received the gift 'to minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.' It is required of stewards that they be found faithful; and fidelity, in the instance before us, consists, not in an exclusive personal appropriation and use of the invaluable gift, but in a cheerful, liberal, and universal diffusion of divine truth amongst others, in the spirit of the authoritative canon, *Freely ye have received, freely give;* and in protecting it, with true fortitude and at all hazards, from the assaults of those who would tread under foot or annihilate it. It is for this reason that the church is described as *the pillar and ground of the truth,** a noble column on whose sides the lines of sacred truth are so deeply engraven as to defy the obliterating hand of time, and so highly raised that the mutilating hand of man cannot reach them, while from its lofty summit the heaven-lit lamp sheds afar its cheering and life-giving rays. As expressive of the same sentiment ,individual churches are compared to 'golden candlesticks,'—suspended on high by the hand of God,

* 1 Tim. iii. 15.

to dispense spiritual illumination to a benighted world, and to preserve alive that holy fire from which all the nations of the earth are yet to receive light and warmth. What a glorious and benign end this which the Saviour subserves by means of his church! Nor shall the benevolent purpose be defeated, by any or all of the insidious attempts that are made, by men who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. They may seek to undermine the sacred pillar; but the event will show, that it is built upon a rock and is not to be overthrown. They may try, by heaping around it the rubbish of their errors, to hide from view its glorious inscription; but their attempts shall all prove abortive. They may flatter themselves that, by the mists and noxious exhalations of their false systems, the pure and blessed light of truth shall be hid, but all these obscurations shall be finally scattered as by a whirlwind, and the lamp of gospel illumination shall continue to burn brighter and brighter till every quarter of the world has been gladdened with its beams. The cause of truth is subject, no doubt, to many vicissitudes; and circumstances may occur to make its timid and anxious friends bewail 'that truth is fallen in the streets.' But while the Saviour has a church in the world, it shall never be wholly trodden down; and that 'Lord, whose eyes are upon the truth,' by pouring out 'the spirit of truth' on the reading and preaching of 'the word of truth' will see to it that to the end of time 'Jerusalem shall be called *a city of truth.*'

By setting up a church in the world, the Mediator has provided for *the public celebration of divine worship.* It is every way proper that some acts of public homage should be paid to the God of the whole earth. The private adoration of individuals would seem not to be all the honour that is due to Him whose claims are so universal and transcendent. He is certainly entitled to acknowledgment in the most public and open manner possible. This is secured by the existence of a visible church, in which his being, perfections, purposes, and works, are publicly discussed; in which his praises are publicly sung, and in which united and public supplications are offered at his throne of grace. Even supposing that, for this end, secret acts of worship might suffice, it may fairly be questioned whether the spirit of such could be kept up, without the influence arising from public institutions. The devotions of the sanctuary, doubt-

less, exert, and are designed to exert, no small influence on those of the closet and the family. The lamp of personal or domestic piety will send forth but a dim and sickly ray, unless trimmed and replenished by frequent visits to the house of the Lord. When the believer feels those fervent emotions that are represented by his soul thirsting for God, and under the impulse of which he is stirred up to seek the Lord with great earnestness, it is that he may 'see the power and glory of the Lord, as he had seen them before, in the sanctuary.' If the psalmist David poured forth the sweetest and warmest strains of devotion in the wilderness of Judea, and in the forest of Hareth, we must go back, for the secret of his high and holy inspiration, to the days when he trod the courts of the temple,—days which not merely exerted a reflex influence on his solitary exercises, but which, so far from making him contented with these, caused his soul still to long, yea even faint, for the courts of the Lord, and to count a day in God's house better than a thousand. If we would rise to true elevation of heart in the closet, we must 'lift up our hands in the sanctuary.' So necessary is the church to the proper worship of God.

The church is designed for *the salvation of men.* It is an asylum, to which destitute and needy sinners may betake, to have all their wants supplied; a city of refuge, whither the guilty and justice-pursued may flee for protection; an ark, in which safety is provided from the threatened judgment about to come on a wicked and ungodly world. Here, whatever a lost and fallen sinner of the human family can require, is provided,—pardon, sanctification, peace, happiness, eternal life; and, by betaking to it in time, all these benefits may be infallibly secured. It is the means by which the grand, benevolent purpose of the divine will, respecting our lapsed race, is carried into full effect. It is the nursery of saints, not less than the refuge of sinners. By its doctrine and discipline, by the spiritual instruction and vigilant superintendence it provides, the edification of its members in knowledge, holiness, comfort, and social duty, is promoted. The ordinances to which it gives access, and the interest it secures in the prayers of those who have power with God, cannot fail to render the fellowship of the church a distinguished means of extending knowledge, strengthening faith, confirming love, deepening humility, increasing joy, and cherishing every devout and holy affec-

tion. The whole work of grace in the soul is thus progressively advanced, and the individual is ultimately trained for the exalted exercises and enjoyments of the heavenly kingdom. The church in this way, becomes the joyous parent of a numerous spiritual progeny. She is the bride, the Lamb's wife, by whom the freeborn sons and daughters of the Almighty are nursed and reared, till such time as they are made fully meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. She is 'the joyful mother of children,' —'the Jerusalem from above, which is free, and the mother of us all.' It has pleased God, for the purpose of bringing many sons unto glory, to set up a visible church in the world, where these sons should be born again; supplied as new-born babes with the sincere milk of the word, that they might grow thereby; fed with the strong meat of the covenant; and thus nurtured and disciplined into the vigour of spiritual manhood,—the fulness of the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus. It is, by being instrumental in the salvation of souls, that the church promotes the glory, and secures the worship, of Jehovah. Divine worship can be celebrated, and the praise of the glory of divine grace can be shown forth, only by those who are 'saved and called with an holy calling, not according to their works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began:' and this work of salvation is carried on in and by the church. The church, by subjecting the conscience to the authority of Christ, by maintaining wholesome discipline, and by affording opportunity of communion with God and with his saints, tends powerfully to enlighten the understanding, to enliven the affections, to restrain the passions, to promote gospel morality, and to advance the divine life in the soul. 'The Lord added to the church such as should be saved. He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.'

Such are the ends subserved by the existence of a church in the world. And it is carefully to be observed, that all these ends are brought about by the mediatorial administration of the Saviour. He it is who sends forth his light and his truth to gladden and direct an ignorant and benighted world; who prompts and enables men to celebrate the ordi-

nances of God's worship ; and who carries forward the work of salvation in the souls of believers.

SECTION V.

All the ordinances of the church are instituted by Christ, the Mediator.

The ends above enumerated, are accomplished by means of instituted ordinances, whose existence in the church is to be ascribed to the authority of Prince Messiah. He alone could determine what were fit, or could give them the sanction of universal obligation. For such purposes, neither the wisdom nor the will of man could avail, being destitute, the one of sufficient depth, and the other of adequate power. Nothing is, of course, left to man, but all is the work of the Mediator, whose skill is infinite, and whose authority is supreme.

He has given to the church a clear, authoritative, and perfect *law*. The church, like every other society, must have regulations. These are contained in the scriptures. Some of them may be viewed as proceeding originally from God, as the moral governor of the universe ; others, as issuing immediately and directly from Christ. The ten commandments, and the natural duties of prayer and praise, are instances of the former ; the peculiar ordinances of New Testament worship, examples of the latter. But, as regards their administration to our fallen race, both classes must be looked upon as emanating from the Mediator. While not without law to God, we are under law to Christ. The promulgation of even the moral law itself, was preceded by an exhibition of God's covenant character, and so might be said, not less than the Jewish law, to be ordained of God in the hands of a Mediator. The Lord is our Lawgiver, as well as our King and our Judge. The revelations given to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, and to the other patriarchs, must be regarded as communicated to the church through Christ. The disclosures that were made at Sinai, we are assured, proceeded from him. 'This is he,' says Stephen, speaking of the Prophet predicted by Moses, 'that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the lively oracles

to give unto us.'* It was he too, who, by his Spirit, enabled the evangelists and apostles to complete the volume of inspiration. The whole of revealed truth, comprehending the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, may thus be looked upon as the code of laws, given to the church by the Messiah. The sacred volume is often expressly designated 'the law,' 'the law of the Lord,' &c.; and in communicating it to men, Christ acts, not merely as a *prophet* making known the will of another, but as a *king* issuing his own authoritative regulations to his subjects which they are bound to obey. 'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.'† The law, thus promulgated, is authoritative. It is not at men's option whether they shall receive and obey it. It is supremely obligatory on all. It is clear and explicit; not expressed in such ambiguous terms that the reader may put upon it what construction he pleases. Men, it is true, may frequently misapprehend it, and may experience some difficulty in ascertaining its meaning; but this arises rather from the want of diligence, application, humility, holiness, perseverance, or prayer, on their part, than from any thing equivocal in the law itself. Nor is this law, in any respect, incomplete. The law of the Lord is perfect. It neither requires, nor admits of any addition being made to it by the ingenuity or authority of man. No individual, however gifted, no council, however solemnly constituted, may assume a strictly legislative power in the church of Christ. Men can only legitimately make known the laws of the Redeemer; and dare not, under pain of a fearful malediction, venture to take from, or to add to, the complete promulgation of his will contained in the Bible. It is of itself sufficient to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Christ has instituted in the church ordinances of divine *worship* and ecclesiastical *fellowship*. Public prayer, praise, reading the scriptures, preaching the word, baptism, and the Lord's Supper, are sanctioned, either by his express institution or his adminstrative example. In the presence of

* Acts vii. 38. † Is. ii. 3.

his disciples he lifted his eyes to heaven, in solemn supplication to the Father. He sung with them a hymn, before going out to the Mount of Olives. When he went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, 'he stood up for to read.' 'Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature,' was among his last directions to the apostles and their successors. He commanded them also to 'baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' In reference to the ordinance of the supper, he said, 'Do this in remembrance of me.' And, as for that portion of time which is consecrated to the peculiar observance of all these institutions, it is written, 'The Son of man is the Lord of the Sabbath.' There is not an institution of divine worship, by which the devotional feelings of the church are expressed, or the edification of the body promoted, which bears not the stamp of the Saviour's authority; and in observing them all, the true saint has the satisfaction to know that he is 'serving the Lord Christ.'

The same is the case with respect to the *government* of the church. In every social body, order is essential to edification, and government is essential to order. This itself would seem to furnish a presumptive argument in favour of the sentiment that Christ has given to the church a regular form of government in opposition to the opinion of those who contend that this matter has been left to be regulated by the wisdom of men, and to be modified agreeably to the various circumstances of those among whom the ordinances of religion happen to be set up. According to this view, there is no form of church government which may be said to possess divine authority. To a sentiment so vague and loose, it may be sufficient to reply, that, when it is considered how important a thing government is to every society, it is perfectly incredible that Christ should have left his church w thout any specific directions on this point: the more so that human wisdom, so liable to err at all times, is incompetent to determine a matter on which so much depends: to which it may be added that, on the above supposition, there would be no room whatever for submission to the authority of Christ in the point in question. It seems much more reasonable, therefore, *a priori*, to conclude that the grand principles of ecclesiastical government are laid down in the scriptures, to which, and not to the ever-shifting ground of expediency, the appeal is made. It is true, those

who advocate the opinion, that the scriptures contain a regular prescribed plan, are not all agreed as to what that plan is. But this is no argument against the principle for which we contend, inasmuch as, at least, equal diversity of sentiment prevails with regard to the doctrines of the gospel, among those who hold that the Bible is the only standard of doctrinal truth. It cannot be expected that we should enter now into the discussion of what that form of government is which Christ has prescribed in his word; although, in other circumstances, we should not shrink from the task of attempting to make it appear that, if not direct statement, at least fair scripture inference, and the example of the primitive Christians, warrant us to adopt the presbyterial model, or that form in which different individual churches are regarded as parts of a grand whole, and the office-bearers as representatives of the people, forming a gradation of church courts, by which all controversies are to be settled, with a right of appeal from the lower to the higher. It is enough, in present circumstances, in proof of the fact that Christ has instituted in his church some form of government, to refer to those passages of scripture in which ecclesiastical officers are represented as invested with power of rule. 'We beseech you, and are *over you* in the Lord. Let the elders that *rule* well, be counted worthy of double honour. Obey them that have the *rule* over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account.'*

Closely connected with its government, is the *discipline* of the church. By this we understand the provision Christ has made for admitting persons to the fellowship of the church; for exercising a salutary vigilance over its members; and for administering censure in case of offences. The term has, perhaps, been too much restricted to the last of these objects; but a little reflection will be sufficient to convince that the others also ought to be included. The purity, peace, and order of the church, depend much on this institution of Christ being properly administered in all its legitimate objects. That he has made provision for these, appears from the power with which he has invested office-bearers in the church, to receive qualified persons into communion; to exercise a watchful inspection; to take cog-

* 1 Thess. v. 12; 1 Tim. v. 17; Heb. xiii. 17.

noscence of offences against the laws of Christ's house; to cite and examine offenders; to administer censure according to the nature and degree of the offence; and either to restore to, or finally eject from, the fellowship of the body, as the person may appear to have profited or not by the censure administered. The authority of Christ in this, as in the other institutions of his house, is a merciful authority. It is a proof of his love, designed to promote the best interests of the offenders themselves, as well as of the body at large to which they belong, and, if rightly improved, a manifest and decided blessing. 'If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear. A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject.'*

SECTION VI.

The Lord Jesus Christ, in virtue of the mediatorial dominion with which he is invested, prescribes the qualifications of the members of the church.

He has a right to say who they are that shall enjoy the privileges of his kingdom. The church is a peculiar society; those who belong to it are, of course, a peculiar people; and it is the prerogative of Him who is its Head to determine the character of such as shall be admitted into its fellowship.

What the qualifications of church members should be, is a point of equal importance and difficulty. With respect to the invisible church, it cannot be questioned that actual regeneration and true faith in Christ are indispensable. Nor can it be doubted, even with respect to the visible church, that the possession of true and vital religion can alone qualify for fully promoting the objects of ecclesiastical communion. But as this is a thing of which the office-bearers of the church are incompetent to judge, it would seem that the utmost they can require is *a credible profession of true religion*. Of this, intelligence and orthodoxy

* Mat. xvii. 17; 1 Tim. v. 20; Tit. iii. 10.

constitute essential elements. Philip required of the Ethiopian eunuch an avowal of his belief in the doctrine of Christ, before admininstering to him the initiatory rite of baptism. 'See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'* Paul instructed Titus, after a suitable trial and admonition, to reject 'a man that is an heretic.' Peter speaks of 'heresies' as being 'damnable,' and denounces, with merited severity, those false teachers who bring such into the church. From all this it appears that soundness in the faith is a requisite qualification. But the soundness required is not that which springs from implicit belief in the church or its ministers, as is contended for by the church of Rome. It is intelligent orthodoxy; arising from an enlightened understanding, and a careful study of the holy scriptures. There is a spurious knowledge of sound doctrine, which may be acquired by being taught to repeat certain set phrases by rote. This consists, rather in the memory of words than the comprehension of ideas. Words, instead of being the vehicles, are, in such a case, the substitutes of thoughts. There is reason to fear that much of the orthodoxy that exists in our churches is of this description; for it is too much the case with many that, when taken off the favourite and accustomed phraseology into which they have been initiated, they display, instead of an enlightened acquaintance with Christian truth, a most deplorable and disgraceful ignorance. Such can never be regarded as intelligent church members. Their attachment to the church cannot be styled, 'a reasonable service;' nor can they be said to be 'always ready to give a reason of the hope which is in them to any man who asks them.' Their knowledge is, at best, but a '*form* of knowledge, and of truth.' However worthless mere speculative knowledge is in itself, it must not be forgotten that a certain degree—we presume not to fix the extent—is indispensable; for God, who will have all men to be saved, will have all men also to come to *the knowledge of the truth*; and the apostles did not cease to pray for their people that they might *be filled with the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*. The ignorant then, as well

* Acts viii. 36, 37.

as the heterodox, are unfit for the communion of the church.

Full *submission to the ordinances* of Christ is another qualification of the members of the church. The disciples of Christ are required to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded; and such as refuse to follow him in this cannot claim to be regarded as his disciples. It is, by the observance of these, that the fellowship of the visible church is expressed; and such as refuse all or any of them are practically disqualified for membership. It is not uncommon for persons who profess religion to live in the neglect of some one ordinance;—family worship, or the Lord's Supper, for example; and yet they would fain be regarded as members of the church. But how can they? The authority which attaches to one, attaches to all; so that a refusal to submit, in any one case, is a virtual denial of the authority which sanctions the whole. A member of the church must be one who submits to all the laws and institutions of Christ's house, not one who obeys only what is agreeable or convenient; the principle of observance being submission to the authority of Christ, and not convenience, expediency, or caprice.

Apparent *religious experience* is also indispensable. *Apparent*, we say, because of the reality man is incompetent to judge; appearances are all that is within the sphere of his cognizance. Whoever seeks admission to the fellowship of the Christian church, professes to have experienced something of the power of religion on his heart. And, although the rulers in the church may not be able to determine whether this profession be real, they are entitled to demand that it be made, and to apply to it certain criteria of judgment. They may not be fit, in any case, to pronounce absolutely on the presence of true religion in the soul, nor, in every case, to decide on its absence; yet the appearances of its being present or absent may be in general so marked as to form a sufficient guide in receiving or refusing persons applying for admission. An individual who knows nothing of the nature of Christian experience, or of the marks by which it is distinguished, is, of course, inadmissable. Nor is it a bare pretension to religious experiences, or every plausible story of feelings and ecstasies, that can form a sufficient ground for admitting to ecclesiastical privileges. Credible evidences of the experimental

power of religion are to be required, and nothing but what is rational, sober, consistent, and holy, can ever constitute credible evidence. 'We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.'*

To these qualifications must be added *consistent behaviour*. The rule of judging is thus explicitly laid down by the Saviour himself:—'By their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but *he that doeth the will* of my Father which is in heaven.' To the same purpose is his expostulation—'And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and *do not* the things which I say?' It is not enough that men 'repent and turn to God;' they must also 'do works meet for repentance.' They must be 'zealous of good works.' 'Whosoever abideth in Christ sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself so to walk even as he walked. Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill? *He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*'

Such are the ingredients of a credible profession of true religion,—the elements of a visible Christian character, the possession of which is necessary to qualify for admission to the church. And let it be carefully observed, that all the qualifications specified are essential. The profession in question does not exist where any one of them is awanting. Suppose a person to pretend to have felt religious experiences, to observe all the institutions of Christ, and to maintain outward regularity of conduct, at the same time that he is either ignorant of, or entertains sentiments at variance with the grand principles of the gospel, such a person is utterly disqualified for church membership. The same may be said of those in whom intelligent orthodoxy, submission to ordinances, and pretended experience, exist apart from consistency of outward life and conversation; or of those in whom intelligence, orthodoxy, observance of

*1 John iii. 14, 19—21.

ordinances, and an unblamable moral reputation are combined, while there is a want of all evidence of the spiritual power of the gospel. While we decidedly object to making actual saintship a term of admission to the visible church, we must at the same time contend for the appearance of it, and for the right of ecclesiastical rulers to judge of the evidences of its existence, the presence of some such evidences being requisite to a credible profession. We deny that the office-bearers of religion have either the power or the right to judge men's hearts: but it were strange, indeed, if they were not warranted to require that those who are professing to believe the gospel shall show some signs that it is exerting its proper influence on their hearts, and to inquire whether it has taught them to abjure self-righteousness, to renounce the practice of sin, and to live by faith on the Lord Jesus Christ; whether, in short, it has taught them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world. Yet, their making these inquiries, and insisting on these qualifications, are not to be considered as supposing that they are infallible judges of the signs of grace in the heart. The Lord only can search the heart and try the reins. But where such evidences as we have spoken of exist, though not infallible proofs of true Christian character, they are to be regarded as sufficient to banish suspicion, and to warrant rulers to admit to the privileges of the church. We are to conclude, in the spirit of charity, that men really *are* what they so plainly *appear* to be.

That such things as constitute a credible profession, and not actual saintship or a positive spiritual change, are the qualifications required by Christ, may be argued on various grounds. It is visible qualifications alone that can properly be required to constitute visible membership in a visible church. It is absurd and unreasonable to require invisible qualities as essential pre-requisites to visible fellowship. To the communion of the invisible church such are indispensable, but not to that of which we are speaking. Analogy may serve to throw light on this subject. In every society, of whatever kind, be it scientific, or literary, or benevolent, all that is required to membership is a professed approbation of its constitution, and an apparent conformity to its rules. It is never thought necessary to scrutinize the heart, with a view to ascertain whether the person be sincere. He may not be sincere;

but so long as he gives no evidence of insincerity, so long as he continues to act as if he were sincere, that is to say, so long as he makes a credible profession, he is considered as entitled to all the privileges of membership. Man, as we said before, has neither the ability nor the right to judge the heart. 'I am he,' saith the faithful and true witness, 'who searcheth the reins and hearts.' To do so is a divine prerogative, and no man or set of men may presume to exercise it. Nay, even the most penetrating angelic intellect is incompetent to discover, excepting by outward manifestations, what is passing within the human breast. It is well that it is so; as, were rulers in the church invested with the right to pronounce infallibly on the spiritual condition of their fellow-men, it is not difficult to see what an engine of tyranny and oppression such a power might become; besides superseding the exercise of self-examination, and making way for the most unprincipled, unfounded, arrogant, and provoking, pretensions. Indeed, the principle that actual saintship is indispensable, is at variance with the exercise of that discipline which we have before seen is one of the institutions of the church. When a church member is suspended or excluded from the enjoyment of privileges for misconduct, it is not because he is considered not to be a saint, but because he has acted inconsistently with his profession. He may be a saint; in the spirit of charity it may be hoped that he is such; nay, there may be very good reasons for entertaining a favourable view of his state. But a real saint may act so as to incur the discipline of the church. This is supposed in the very institution of discipline, which is designed to promote the edification of the godly. David, while his sin was unrepented of, was unfit for the fellowship of a holy society. A person who departs for a time from the right path is not to be 'counted as an *enemy*, but admonished as a *brother*.' But if a saint may be lawfully excluded from the fellowship of the visible church, even for a time, it is plain that something else than saintship is the qualification for communion.

Both Christ and his apostles appear to have acted on the principles for which we contend. Judas, who had a devil, and was known by Christ to be unconverted, was recognized and treated as a disciple, until he proved the hollowness of his profession by his conduct. Simon Magus, on a credible profession of religion, received the ordinance of baptism,

although he was afterwards pronounced to be in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity. And, in short, there might have been less dispute on this subject, had due attention been given to the figures under which the church is represented. It is spoken of as a vine, some of the branches of which are barren, while others are fruitful; as a floor, on which there is found chaff as well as grain; as a field, in which are tares as well as wheat; as a net, which encloses bad as well as good fishes; and as a house, in which there are vessels to dishonour as well as to honour;—figures which could, with no propriety, be employed to represent the church, were actual saintship essential to her communion.

But does not this suppose that there may be hypocrites in the communion of the church? It does: but what then? The same admission will fall to be made on the supposition that actual regeneration is the qualification for church membership, as of this men can judge only by appearances, and it must be admitted that appearances may sometimes deceive. Nor is it destructive of the character of the church, as a spiritual society and the body of Christ, to suppose, that it may comprehend within it persons who are not real saints. Let it be recollected that it is of the visible church of Christ we are now speaking; and if there be only visible saintship, it is all that can be strictly required, as it is all that can be judged of by man, to the visible fellowship of such a community. Analogy may here aid our conceptions. The world is God's world, notwithstanding that there are sinful men in it. The heart of a believer is a renewed heart, notwithstanding that it is infested with manifold corruptions. Why then may not the church of Christ be supposed to contain in it some who are not real Christians, without destroying its character?

Nay it might even be shown that such a mixed state as we have supposed, is turned to good account in the providence of God. The quantity of moral evil in the world is thus diminished; inasmuch as the nominal members of the church are necessitated to conform to the laws of morality more strictly than they would otherwise do, in order to keep up the consistency of their assumed character. The persons themselves may not be in a whit better state, as regards God, than the openly profligate and abandoned; but, as respects their fellow-men, it is not to be doubted that it is better they should repress than that they should give full

scope to their enmity of heart; better surely that they should treat the name of God with reverence than that they should blaspheme it; better that they should maintain a show of truth, probity, and respect for the ordinances of religion, than that they should lie, steal, and pour contempt on all the institutions of Christ; better, in short, that they should maintain before their families and others the common decencies of life, than that they should set before them the example of open profligacy and vice. If so, the state of things by which they are constrained to do so is not without its use. Besides, it is calculated to lessen the sum of human misery, by averting public judgments. Facts warrant us to believe, that open judgments may be restrained, where the souls of men are not saved, out of respect to the restraints laid upon open sin: so that whatever tends to promote the latter, goes also to secure the former. Moreover, it would not be very difficult to show that the arrangement in question is overruled for extending the resources, increasing the numbers, and promoting the protection of the church.

Not less unfortunate is the objection that the principle in question leads to the prostitution of sealing ordinances. For it must be obvious to all, that, unless the friends of the opposite scheme can pretend, with infallible accuracy, to judge the heart, the objection applies as much to them as to us. And, it may be added, that it overlooks the relation of the sacraments to the visible church. They have a special relation, it is true, to the church invisible; and, as signs of spiritual blessings, can be participated of with individual profit only by true believers. But they have also a relation to the visible church; and viewed as signs of the covenant character of God, certifying the doctrine of salvation by the blood of Christ, and affirming the necessity of being interested in the mediation of the Lord Jesus, the public administration of them, even where some who outwardly partake are unbelievers, may serve many important purposes to both the church and the world.

This view of the matter, if properly understood, can have no tendency to retard the exertions of the office-bearers and friends of the church in promoting her purity. It can have no effect in inducing them to receive into communion known unbelievers, or in warranting them to administer to such the sacred privileges of Christ's house.

By no means. That God glorifies himself by a state of things in which good and evil are mingled together, is no reason why we should be indifferent to the existence of evil, much less why we should give encouragement to its existence. It is the prerogative of infinite wisdom, power, and grace, to bring good out of evil. But we are not warranted, on that account, to attempt any thing but what is good; we must not do evil that good may come. The existence of evil in the world, as before remarked, does not destroy its relation to God; yet are we not, on this account, at liberty to encourage vice in the world, but bound to use every effort for its suppression and extirpation. The existence of depravity in the heart of a saint does not destroy his renewed character; yet is he bound to resist every known sin, to repress every evil principle, and to make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. In like manner, although the existence of nominal Christians in its communion does not destroy the character of the church, this is no reason why the doors of fellowship should be thrown open, and the seals of the covenant administered, to known unbelievers, or why every effort should not be made to exclude such from her membership.

SECTION VII.

Christ, in virtue of his mediatorial dominion, appoints, qualifies, and invests, the office-bearers in the church.

Laws, institutions, and ordinances, suppose the existence of an order of men by whom they are administered. They cannot administer themselves; nor can it be regarded as any thing short of fanaticism to maintain, as is done by some, that every one is to be guided in the worship of God merely by the fluctuating impulse of his own feelings, or 'the light' within, as it is called. The scriptures give no countenance to any such wild idea. On the contrary, they give us good reason to believe that, from the beginning, the heads of families were authorized by God to act both as priests and as prophets. During the Mosaic economy, we know that a regular order of office-bearers existed; for there were laws for regulating their preparatory qualifications, their administration, and their succession. At the New Testament period, also, there existed a regular lawful

ministry, some of the offices connected with which were certainly of a permanent nature, while others, of an obviously temporary kind, after serving the purpose for which they were introduced, were suffered to die away. Of this latter description were the offices held by those who were called apostles, prophets, and evangelists, the peculiarities of whose functions we wait not to delineate. But there is no reason for supposing that with these the existence of a standing ministry in the church was to cease. The very reverse is the inference we should seem warranted to draw. For, if, even in an age which was blessed with extraordinary communications of the divine Spirit, teachers and rulers were deemed requisite, it is not reasonable to expect that, when these extraordinary gifts are withdrawn, the church should be able to do without office-bearers altogether. This view of the subject is confirmed by much that is found in the history and writings of the apostles themselves. To this purpose are these express statements of Paul :—'And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. And God hath set some in the church: first, apostles; secondly, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles; then, gifts of healing, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.'* The apostles, accordingly, were careful to 'commit the form of sound words to faithful men, able to teach others also.' They ordained them elders in every city. The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, by reminding them of those who had *had* the rule over them, whose faith they were required to follow after their decease, and at the same time exhorting them to obey those that *have* the rule over them, distinctly recognizes the existence of not merely one but two sets of teachers after the apostles. When John wrote his apocalypse there were *angels*, that is to say, office-bearers, to whom the epistles to the Asiatic churches were addressed. Add to these considerations, the circumstance that the promise made by the Head of the church himself to his apostles proceeded on

* Eph. iv. 11, 12. 1 Cor. xii. 28.

the supposition that there should be a standing ministry to the end of time, and is utterly irreconcilable with the notion that such was to expire with the apostles. *Lo, I am with you* ALWAY, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.

The permanent and ordinary office-bearers in the church are presbyters. These are of two kinds, namely, such as teach as well as rule, and such as rule only. The former are commonly known by the names of pastors, teachers, or ministers, and the latter by that of ruling elders. Presbyters of the former class appear to be the only description of bishops authorized by the scriptures or by the practice of the primitive churches. The word commonly translated *bishop* signifies an *overseer*, and is so rendered in several instances in the common version. By a comparison of texts, we are led to conclude, that, in the early Christian church, the bishop and the presbyter were synonymous terms, denoting the very same office. In the twentieth chapter of the Acts, those called in the seventeenth verse 'elders,' πρεσβυτερους, are called 'overseers,' or bishops, επισκοπους, in the twenty-eighth. In the epistle to Titus, first chapter, the qualifications of 'elders,' πρεσβυτερους, and of a 'bishop' επισκοπους, are the same. In the first epistle of Peter, the verb from which the word translated *bishop* is derived, is employed in describing the duties of elders:—'The elders, πρεσβυτερους, which are among you I exhort.—Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the over-sight thereof,' επισκοπουντες. It is not, then, from any thing in the scripture usage of the terms, that the inference can be drawn, that the one term describes a different and a higher office than that which is pointed out by the other. Neither is there any thing in the original signification of the terms themselves to warrant this conclusion; but rather the contrary. *Overseer* and *presbyter*, while they are used indiscriminately to designate persons holding the same office, differ from one another in their primitive meaning so as to point out, indeed, the one the activity of service, the other the dignity of rule: but it so happens that the former idea is suggested by the term which episcopalians understand to designate the office which is superior, and the latter idea attaches to the term which they regard as expressive of the office that is inferior. So far, indeed, from *presbyter* being, either in its primitive import or its current use in scripture,

expressive of inferiority, presbyters are described as exercising the very highest official acts—acts which, according to episcopalians, belong only to bishops. Presbyters are described as *ruling*. The *elders* of Ephesus are required to '*take heed* to the flock.' We read of 'the *elders* that *rule* well.' Presbyters are spoken of as ordaining: 'Neglect not the gift which is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the *laying on of the hands of the presbytery*.' When to these considerations it is added that there is but one ministerial commission, and that the preaching of the word is spoken of in scripture as a more dignified function than that of ruling, and as entitling to more abundant honour,* the evidence adduced will, perhaps, be thought sufficient to warrant the opinion that overseer and presbyter describe the same office, and that the one supposes no sort of superiority over the other, but on the contrary a clear and perfect equality.

As to the presbyters of the second class—those, we mean, who only rule,—their existence seems plainly enough intimated in the plurality of elders which existed in the primitive churches, it being highly improbable that that there should be more than one teacher who requir e to be supported by the members; in the distinction made betwixt 'him that exhorteth' and 'him that ruleth,' and betwixt 'teachers' and 'helps and governments;' and in the very clear line of demarcation drawn betwixt the elders that merely rule, and those who also labour in the word and doctrine.†

But it is not so much our object, to show what offices Christ has appointed in his church, as to speak of the exercise of his mediatorial authority in appointing, qualifying, and investing, with power, the men by whom these offices are held.

Appointment to office in the church is essential to the regular discharge of the functions belonging to office. 'I sent them not, nor commanded them: therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord.' 'How shall they preach except they be sent?' 'No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made a High Priest; but He that said unto him, Thou art my Son,

* 1 Tim. v. 17.
† Acts xiv. 23. Rom. xii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 28. 1 Tim. v. 17.

to-day have I begotten thee.'* It must surely be presumptuous, in any mere servant of Christ to dispense with what was requisite to give validity to the office of his Master. But what constitutes a sufficient and valid appointment? An inward impulse of the divine Spirit, inclining an individual to serve the church in a public capacity, is not enough, as it can be of use only to the person himself. An immediate divine commission, as it requires to be substantiated by miracles, is not now to be expected. The only appointment, then, that can now be looked for, would seem to be that which consists in solemn and regular investiture with office by persons previously qualified and authorized; in other words, presbyterian ordination.

Ordination derives its authority and validity from the appointment or institution of Christ as King and Head of his church. The practice of ordination in the primitive church supposes that it was instituted by Christ. The apostles could not have practised it, nor could the inspired writers have given directions with regard to the performance of it, unless they had been authorized so to do; and by whom could they be so authorized but by Christ himself? The 'laying on of hands,' we are required to consider as much a part of Christianity as 'repentance from dead works, or faith toward God, or the resurrection of the dead, or eternal judgment.'†

Ordination consists in the transmission of ecclesiastical power, by the solemn and appropriate form of the laying on of the hands of presbyters. The laying on of hands in ordination, is not a mere unauthorized ceremony. It is distinctly recognized both by apostolical example and precept. 'The gift that is in thee, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.' 'Lay hands suddenly on no man.' Not that any thing is actually conveyed, by the mere imposition of hands, from the persons engaged in the act to the person who is the object of it. It is properly the *sign* rather than the *medium* of conveyance; just as sprinkling with water is significant of the application of the blood of Christ and the regeneration of the Spirit to the soul of the person baptized. Sprinkling with water does not actually convey these spiritual benefits; yet it is not an empty, un-

* Jer. xxiii. 32. Rom. x. 15. Heb. v. 4, 5.
† Heb. vi. 1, 2.

meaning ceremony, but an appropriately significant and solemn act. In like manner, the imposition of hands in ordination is not a useless form, but the appropriate mode by which it hath pleased the Head of the church to express the communication of official power, to those by whom it is to be exercised. It were well that this view of the subject were more attended to than it is.

The act of ordination belongs to persons previously ordained. If it is significant of the conveyance of office-power, it can only be performed by those who possess such power. The power, it is true, is not *derived from* men but from Christ, the fountain-head of all authority. But it is *transmitted through* men; and there seems to be an obvious propriety, if not necessity, that the medium of transmission should be such as to bring to view the thing transmitted. It follows that the act of ordination belongs not to the people. It is of great importance to observe that the existence of the ministerial office is no way dependent on the members of the church. Some have identified ordination and the call of the people. Others have considered the call of the people to be an indispensable pre-requisite to ordination, an essential preparatory step to investiture with power and authority in the church. It does not appear to us that either of these opinions is correct. Not that we are indifferent to the right of the Christian people to call such as shall be placed over them in the Lord. The call of the people, on the contrary, we hold to be essential to the formation of the *pastoral relation;* and every attempt to deprive them of this right, or to cripple them in the exercise of it, we hold to be, at once a scandalous interference with the prerogative of Christ, the church's Head, and a daring invasion of the privileges of the church's members. We hold that, in the formation of the interesting, and solemn, and important relation in question, the people must have a *choice;* it is mockery to put them off with a *veto*. But, then, there is a distinction to be observed betwixt the pastoral relation and the ministerial office—a distinction which is not sufficiently understood, but one, the correct understanding of which would go far to prevent many mistakes, and to remove many prejudices, on subjects connected with the office-bearers of the church.

The ministerial office is necessary to the full exercise of the functions arising out of the pastoral relation. Accord-

ingly, the former is usually conferred at the time when the latter is formed; and hence may have arisen the misconception by which they are identified or confounded. But, although the pastoral relation supposes the existence of the ministerial office, the ministerial office may, and often does, exist, without the pastoral relation. This being the case, the choice of the people may be viewed as essential to the latter, and yet be no way necessary to the former. On the one hand, the pastoral relation, springing from the choice of the people, and supposing the mutual consent of the parties betwixt whom it exists, is necessarily restricted and exclusive. On the other hand, the ministerial office, derived from the church's office-bearers, is wide as the wide world itself in the sphere over which it extends, and is altogether independent of the will of the people. The pastor cannot properly discharge the functions of the pastoral relation, without the consent of the people; and even this he can do only within the limited bounds of his own parish or congregation; but the minister of Christ, in virtue of his office, is entitled to traverse the bounds of the habitable globe, and to proclaim the message of salvation in the ears of all those with whom he meets, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. No magic circle circumscribes the bounds of *his* ministrations. The laying on of the hands of the presbytery has given him a relation to the church universal, and has invested him with authority to exercise his ministry, wherever God in his providence may call him, or may give him an opportunity. Wherever his voice can reach, wherever his feet can carry him, wherever, by land or by water, he can have his person transported, there has he a full and unquestionable right to unfold the message with which he is entrusted as a minister, and to beseech sinners of every clime, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. In this he needs not to wait for the call of the people. The function of his high and glorious office is not suspended on the invitation of men. The people can neither impart nor remove the right to exercise it. It descends from Christ to the fountain of all authority, through a regular and divinely-appointed ordination.

It is scarcely necessary to add, after this, that the power of ordination does not lie with a bishop,—a diocesan bishop. Paul and Barnabas, indeed, ordained elders in every city: but they did so, not as bishops, but as apostles—an extraor-

dinary office, whose functions included those of the ordinary. Timothy and Titus ordained; but it will require stronger proof than we have yet seen to convince us that they were *diocesan* bishops. Timothy himself was ordained by the laying on of *the hands of the presbytery*. Supernatural gifts he appears to have received by the putting on of *Paul's* hands; but the ministerial gift was conferred on him by the laying on of the hands of the *presbytery*.

By means of ordination, provision is made for the regular and orderly transmission of official power in the church, throughout all ages of its existence. We are no sticklers for an uninterrupted succession from the apostles as essential to the validity of official administrations. The value of the Christian ministry is suspended on no such contingency. Extraordinary circumstances, we fully admit, may warrant extraordinary measures; and there is no form or rite in being in the church which may not lawfully be dispensed with on particular occasions. The letter must ever be held to be subordinate to the spirit; and when both cannot be had, it is obvious the former must yield to the latter. So it is in the case of ordination. The importance and propriety of installing men into office, in all ordinary cases, by the imposition of the hands of presbyters, may be maintained in perfect consistency with the admission that cases may occur in which, at the call of the people, persons may warrantably and validly exercise the functions of the ministry, without having undergone the solemnity in question. Still, in all common cases, the regular and orderly way is that of which we have been speaking. It thus appears that ordination, while it confers authority of boundless extent as regards the sphere within which it may be exercised, provides for the perpetuation of it to the end of time. It possesses the property of indefinite and endless reproduction, and is in this way adapted to the conveyance of powers for which the necessity is both universal and perpetual.

And what, it is time now to ask, are these powers with which the Head of the church invests her office-bearers? In general, the authority with which ministers are invested is authority to dispense all the laws and ordinances of the church; and, by adverting to what we have previously said regarding these, we may come to form a tolerably correct idea of the nature and extent of office-power in the church of Christ. This power, let it be dis-

tinctly marked, is, in no shape or degree whatever, absolute and unlimited. As it is derived from the Lord Jesus Christ, it is to be exercised within such limitations as he, in the exercise of his sovereignty, has seen fit to appoint. In short, it is not sovereign, but delegated power; and this necessarily supposes restriction and accountability. Church power has usually been distributed into three kinds. The first is called *dogmatic power*, (potestas δογματικη,) and refers to dogmas or articles of faith. This may be viewed as comprehending whatever is connected with instruction. It concerns what men are to believe; and consists, in the right, not, as is claimed by the church of Rome, of determining what man is to believe, but of explaining and enforcing the truths of religion, either by circulating the scriptures, or preaching the gospel, or exhibiting summaries of Christian truth; the ultimate appeal being in every case to the word of God. The second is called *ordaining power*, (potestas διατακτικη,) and refers to the government of the church. This comprehends, again, whatever is connected with rule; and consists, not in the power to institute a form of church government, or to make laws for regulating the conduct of men, or to appoint rites and ceremonies, but in the power to take such steps, and devise such measures, as may be requisite for administering the laws and ordinances which Christ has instituted. It is not legislative, but ministerial; it supposes an authority, not to make laws, but to administer them, and of course to pass such enactments or regulations, on points of external order, as may be necessary to give full effect to the institutions of Christ. The third is called the *power of discipline*, (potestas διακριτικη,) and refers to admission to, or exclusion from, the communion of the church. The existence of such a power has been formerly proved. Its nature is entirely spiritual; extending only to the souls of men, and not to their bodies, property, or lives. The highest censures which the office-bearers of the church, in virtue of this power, are entitled to inflict, are addressed to the conscience and have for their object 'the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.' Civil pains, whether fines, confiscation, imprisonment, exile, or death, belong not to ecclesiastical office-bearers; and the church which has recourse to these, in whatever degree, so far identifies itself with the Romish usurpation, which claims dominion alike over the bodies and the souls of men.

Such is the power possessed by the ministers of religion; with which they are invested, not by the people over whom it is exercised, nor by the civil magistrate, but solely by the Lord Jesus Christ himself; and which is conveyed in the manner formerly described.

The exercise of such varied and solemn powers, pre-supposes certain necessary qualifications, for which also the office-bearers in the church are indebted to him from whom the powers themselves are derived. The extraordinary endowments possessed in the primitive age, have long since been suspended; and their place must now be made up by a competent share of natural talents, educational acquirements, and spiritual gifts. Without a portion of such qualifications, there can be no regular call to ministerial office. The Head of the church sends none on a warfare on their own charges. He fits his servants for the work he requires of them. Where he has not given the qualification, he does not require the work. And if the functions of office are of so arduous and responsible a nature as to make all who have right feelings, to exclaim, in the prospect of undertaking them, 'Who is sufficient for these things?' the promised assistance is also such as to permit them to add, 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament.' To qualify for public instruction, there must be not only an extensive knowledge of the scriptures, but an acquaintance with literature in general, and particularly with sacred literature. To fit for government and discipline, much knowledge of human nature, a large share of natural sagacity, and no small degree of gravity, patience and prudence, are requisite. These and similar qualifications are derived from Christ himself, with whom is the residue of the Spirit, and whose it is so to clothe his ministers with salvation that his people may, through their successful labours, have reason to shout for joy. 'To every one is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ.' Nor are those entrusted with the transmission of official power at liberty to confer it on any who are found, on proper trial, to be deficient in gifts and attainments. 'The things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit to faithful men, who shall be *able* to teach others also.' No greater injury can be done to the church, and we may add to the persons

themselves, than to admit to office men who are not qualified to discharge its functions with ability. The office is thus exposed to contempt; the members of the church who happen to be placed under the care of such persons are not edified; and the persons themselves become a laughing-stock to the profane. Most mistaken policy it is, therefore, in every point of view, from motives of commisseration and pity, to make a farce of preparatory trials, and to

> 'Lay careless hands
> On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.'

SECTION VIII.

Christ's power over the church is, farther, apparent in rendering the administration of ordinances, by her proper office-bearers, effectual to the salvation of her members.

The laws, worship, government, and discipline, instituted by the Redeemer, are designed to promote the spiritual welfare of souls. Their efficacy for this purpose, is derived from Christ himself. In one point of view, indeed, this efficacy is to be ascribed to the divine Spirit. But the Spirit, it should never be forgotten, acts in conjunction with the Redeemer. He is the Spirit of Christ; is sent by Christ; and acts in every case under the commission of Christ. Thus it is that the whole honour of man's redemption is secured to the Mediator, as well the renovation of man's nature and character by the Spirit, as the removal of his guilt by the Saviour's own personal work. Agreeably to this, Christ is represented as He with whom is the residue of the Spirit; as sending the Comforter to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and as having, when he ascended on high, received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them. The precious oil, which goes down to the skirts of his garments, is first poured upon his head.

The whole world being by nature in a state of rebellion against the Lord and his Anointed, the Redeemer can have no friends among men until he makes them such; can have no spiritual subjects until he subdues them to himself; can have no obedient children, until, by the rod of his strength

sent forth out of Sion, he has made a willing people in the day of his power. Satan reigns in the hearts of all who are in their natural state. The unrenewed heart is Satan's seat. To dethrone the tyrant, and lead the rebel captive, is the prerogative of Him who is king in Sion, the Faithful and True, who in righteousness doth judge and make war. The rescue of fallen man from sin and Satan, is effected, not by the strength of the evidence by which the gospel is supported; not by any inherent power in the truth itself; not by the clearness, and faithfulness, and eloquence with which it is propounded; not by mere moral suasion: but by the naked energy of the Saviour himself. Where the word of this king is, there is power; and nowhere else. It is by his omnific word, convincing of sin, enlightening the mind in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing the will, that any are persuaded and enabled to embrace the Saviour as he is offered to them in the gospel. This it is alone that can open men's eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The kingdom of God is within men. It cometh not with observation. The arrow which pierces the heart and brings down its enmity, which inflicts the wound that nothing but a Saviour's blood can heal, is selected, is fitted to the string, is propelled with unerring aim, and guided with infallible certainty, by the skill and power of the Redeemer himself. 'Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the hearts of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.'*

To such as are thus subdued by the power of his grace, he imparts the comforting sense of pardon, and the honourable title of children. Their justification and adoption, formally considered, are legal acts for which they are indebted to Christ as a Priest; but the comforting sense of safety derived from the one, and of dignity derived from the other, they owe to his power as a King conveying it to their hearts. If it is by his sacerdotal blood that they are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses, it is no less true that 'he is exalted a

* Ps. xlv. 3—5.

Prince and a Saviour, *to give* repentance to Israel and *forgiveness of sin*.' Nor is it less explicitly made known that 'to as many as receive him, he gives power to become the sons of God;' and, by sending forth his Spirit into their hearts, he enables them to cry 'Abba, Father.' Now, all this is brought about by his giving efficacy to the ordinances.

In the same way it is that He rules and reigns in the hearts of his people. He asserts his authority over the conscience, the will, and the life; and prescribes his law as the rule of their obedience. They recognize him as their master; cheerfully acknowledge his supremacy; and delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man. He puts his law into their minds, and writes it in their hearts. They yield themselves up to him as his willing servants; and every principle that is within them, every affection, volition, desire, proclaims him King and Lord. The members of the church have many enemies. The devil, the world, and the flesh, are in league against them. They wrestle not only against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. They are required to assume the character, equipments, and attitude of soldiers. They must put on the whole armour of God, that they may be able to stand; having their loins girt about with truth; having on the breastplate of righteousness; having their feet shod with the preparation of the gospel; and taking the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Satan, the chief and leader of these enemies, exasperated at his overthrow, makes a desperate effort to regain his lost dominion over them; and, although he cannot succeed, he does much to annoy such as have been rescued from his grasp. And how are persons in themselves so feeble and powerless to sustain the shock of this unequal combat? They have an omnipotent King, whose wisdom and might are exerted on their behalf, to assist and protect them. By the instructions of his word, by the influence of his example, by the moral power of his ordinances, as well as by the positive strength which he imparts by his Spirit, he teaches their hands to war, and their fingers to fight; he girds them with strength unto the battle, subdues under them those that rise up against them, and gives them the necks

of their enemies. Sin, indwelling sin, has no longer dominion over them: by faith they overcome the world: and God bruises Satan under their feet. Yes; ye good soldiers of Jesus Christ! your King not only witnesses from his throne in the heavens the contest in which you are engaged, but cheers you on with his presence, encourages you by his example, animates you by his promises, stretches over you the impenetrable shield of his righteousness, and insures you by his grace of final conquest. Well, then, may you exclaim with the Jewish prophet, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me:'* or break forth into the exulting language of the apostle, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us.'†

Nor will their glorious Captain and Leader rest satisfied until he has rendered the administration of gospel ordinances effectual, in conducting forward the work of grace in the souls of his people to its final consummation in eternal glory. The honour of having brought the struggle with their enemies to a successful issue, shall be followed by the enjoyment of an everlasting reward. And the Saviour himself, as King of saints and King of glory, shall adorn them with their white robes, put the palms of victory into their hands, place upon their heads their crowns of gold, invite them to sit with him on his great high throne, and fill their mouths with unceasing Alleluias.

SECTION IX.

The mediatorial dominion of Christ may be seen in the provision he has made for the diffusion and perpetuation of the visible church; its diffusion over the habitable globe; and its perpetuation to the end of time.

We have already specified universality among the attributes of the visible church. Its nature is such as to admit of universal extension; and its divine Head will so order

* Mic. vii. 8. † Rom. viii. 35, 37.

the affairs of Providence, as to secure for it a diffusion proportioned to the catholicity of its character. Of this the scriptures give positive and direct assurance. 'The stone cut out without hands became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. All nations shall serve him. All nations shall call him blessed. The whole earth shall be filled with his glory. The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.'* It is lamentable to think how small a portion of the earth has hitherto been blessed with the ordinances of true religion. Taking a survey of the world, and bearing in mind such predictions and promises as those above cited, we cannot help feeling that 'there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed.' The field of Messiah's operations is the world; nor will he cease to put forth his power for the extension of his church, till he has made the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. The outward ordinances of visible Christianity shall be universally spread abroad; efficacy shall be given to the means of grace, by the outpouring of the Spirit; and every obstruction to the triumphant progress of the chariot of salvation shall be effectually removed. Ignorance shall be dispelled before the spreading beams of gospel light. The evidences of divine truth shall compel infidelity, which now rears its unblushing front, to hide its head. The delusions of the false prophet shall be dissipated by the drying up of the river Euphrates, that a way may be prepared for the kings of the east. Jewish obstinacy and unbelief shall be broken, and the veil taken from the eyes of that interesting people in reading Moses and the prophets. All the hideous forms of polytheistic paganism shall give way to the one religion of Jesus. That monstrous corruption of Christianity, which has so long usurped the place and claimed the honour of the true faith, shall be cast into the lake of fire. The anti-christian leaven, which has been so extensively diffused, shall be purged out of both churches and nations. Every usurper

* Dan. ii. 35; Ps. lxxii. 8, 11, 17, 19; Is. ii. 2; xi. 9.

of the rights and prerogatives of Sion's King shall be pushed from his seat. Every rival kingdom shall be overthrown. The civil and ecclesiastical constitutions of the earth shall be regulated by the infallible standard of God's word; their office-bearers, of every kind, shall acknowledge the authority of Messiah the Prince; and the greatest kings on earth shall cast their crowns at his feet. All enemies shall be put under his feet; and such as resist the melting influence of his grace, shall be crushed beneath the iron rod of his power. By spiritual conversion or judicial destruction, he shall effect the entire subjugation of the globe. And, at the last, there shall not be a spot on the face of the habitable earth where the true church of Christ shall not have effected a footing, nor a single tribe of the vast family of man which shall not have felt the meliorating and blissful influence of Christian laws and institutions. Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, shall then be united in one vast brotherhood;—ranged under one standard: the bond of their union, the holy cement of the gospel,—the emblem of their banner, the cross.

The church, thus universally diffused, shall be effectually perpetuated. The government of Messiah shall not only increase, but it shall have 'no end.' It shall be 'established with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever.' We have seen the provision Christ has made for a succession of ministers. Not less carefully has he provided for a succession of members throughout all generations. Even after all other enemies have been subdued, death, it is true, shall be perpetually removing to another world those who have held both public and private stations in the church; but even death cannot bring about the extinction of the church of Christ. Instead of the fathers, he takes the children. He sends forth his Spirit to accompany the ordinances with power, and thus secures a succession of spiritual men to occupy the places of those who are taken to a higher sphere of existence. The ravages that are daily made in the ranks of the disciples, by the fell destroyer, are thus repaired, and his covenant people preserved from extermination. Till the end of time, there shall be 'daily added to the church such as shall be saved. A seed shall serve him; it shall be counted to the Lord for a generation. They shall come and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born.' Families which take great pride

in their antiquity, and look back with pleasure on a long unbroken line of ancestry, have at length their names blotted from the earth. Societies which, for a length of time, make a conspicuous figure in the world, fall at last into decay, and finally disappear. Empires which have flourished for ages, and borne sway over a large portion of the earth, are destined to sink into everlasting oblivion. But the church of Christ, notwithstanding the combined assaults of which she is the object, shall continue to flourish and to exist while sun and moon endure; nay, when the sun has been changed into darkness, and the moon into blood. Christians are apt to feel discouraged when they reflect on the extensive prevalence of error compared with the limited success of the true religion, and despondingly to inquire, 'By whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small.' But if they can only have faith in the mediatorial dominion, they may dismiss their fears, and confidently rely in, not merely the preservation, but the triumphant success and universal establishment, of the church. The Lord reigns: and the children of Sion may well be joyful in their King.

What, then, must be the unspeakable happiness of those who are true members of Christ's church;—a society founded, organized, and incorporated by the Redeemer himself; purchased with his precious blood; possessed of the most interesting properties; subservient to the most important ends; whose ordinances, members, office-bearers, and administration, are all so illustrious; and which is destined to attain to such permanency and extent? The honour and advantage of being connected with such a community cannot be small. It is a lamentable evidence of the extent of human depravity, that these should be appreciated by so few. The church of Christ is even now but a little flock.

In reflecting on the mediatorial dominion over the church, and the many things which it involves, one cannot help being struck with the glory which it is calculated to reflect on the character of the Mediator himself. *Head of the church, King of Sion,* and *King of saints,* are illustrious titles; they bespeak majesty and splendour; and are well fitted to preclude all unworthy conceptions of him to whom they belong. They are calculated to prevent any false inference being drawn from the more humiliating points of his history. Were we only to look at him lying in the man-

ger of Bethlehem's inn, sitting at the well of Jacob, standing at Pilate's judgment-seat, hanging on the cross, or sleeping a lifeless corpse in Joseph's tomb, we might be induced to regard him as, indeed, a root out of dry ground. But, when we think of him giving existence to such a society as the church, instituting her ordinances, authorizing and qualifying her ministers, giving efficacy to her laws, and protecting her from destruction ; when we think on the wisdom of his government, the bountifulness of his gifts, the resistless energy and gracious influence of his administration, we are filled with high and elevated views of his character. Instead of supposing him to have no form nor comeliness, no beauty for which we should desire him, we feel drawn towards him with the admiration and respect due to one who is crowned with glory and honour.

To interfere, in any degree, with the Redeemer's prerogatives as Head of the church, is conduct the criminality of which cannot well be over-estimated. Such atrocious wickedness it might well be supposed none would be found sufficiently abandoned to perpetrate. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that all men should disclaim, in words, all participation in such aggravated guilt. But let us look at the testimony of facts. In the church of Rome, the pope claims a universal spiritual power ; while professing to act only as the vicar or vicegerent of Christ on earth, he blasphemously assumes the title of *head of the church ;* and, that it may not be conceived to be an empty title, he sacrilegiously presumes to alter, add to, and dispense with, the ordinances which Christ himself has appointed. Supremacy over the church is claimed also by the British crown. It is expressly provided for by law, that the imperial power in these realms shall have annexed to it the dignity of supreme head of the church, in virtue of which authority the monarch 'convenes, prorogues, restrains, regulates, and dissolves all ecclesiastical synods and convocations—has the right of nomination to vacant bishoprics and certain other ecclesiastical preferments—and, as head of the church, is the *dernier* resort in all ecclesiastical causes ; an appeal lying ultimately to him in chancery, from the sentence of every ecclesiastical judge.'* Nor is the exercise of this supremacy confined to the episcopal church of England.

* Black. Com. book I. chap. vii. sec. 6.

It is deserving of consideration whether, by prescribing the form of church government which is established in Scotland; by the right of patronage claimed and exercised by the state in the appointment of ministers; by enjoining the observance of days of fasting and thanksgiving; and by authoritatively convening and dissolving the supreme court, the state is not guilty of such encroachments on the liberties of the Scottish church as imply an invasion of the sole headship of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is truly appalling to think, in how many instances the crown rights and royal prerogatives of Sion's King have been invaded by men, taking upon them to legislate in and for the church; to model her government and worship, in order to meet the ends of a pitiful expediency; to settle articles of faith; and even to brandish the sword of civil power over the heads of such as refused to submit to an arbitrary and unrighteous dictation. Nor is it greatly less grieving to reflect, that so many should tamely submit to these sinful encroachments, and show so little regard for the honour of the Redeemer, as not to stand up at all hazards for his inalienable rights. The arrogance of such pretensions on the one hand, and the unfaithfulness of such compliance on the other, are alike to be reprobated. With regard to the one and to the other, the friend of the Redeemer may well feel disposed to say, 'Tell it not in Gath;' and to use every means in his power to prevent the dear-bought and exclusive rights of Emanuel from being infringed upon by any power upon earth. And as all such encroachments are as unsafe as they are sinful, such as lift their warning voice against them, and refuse to submit to them, certainly manifest more true regard for the welfare of their fellow-men, as well as more laudable zeal for the glory of their Lord, than those who regard them with cowardly silence or spiritless acquiescence.

CHAPTER VIII.

MEDIATORIAL DOMINION OVER THE NATIONS.

It was before remarked that under the universal dominion of Messiah are comprehended two grand associations, the peculiar importance of which seemed to render necessary a more full and separate discussion of each. These are the church and civil society. To the former some attention has been given in the preceding chapter. We now take up the latter.

The matter, here, is the headship of Jesus, as Mediator, over the nations of the world, or the political associations of men. Besides its own intrinsic importance, this branch of our subject demands attention, from the neglect with which it has long been treated, the opposition it has had to encounter, and its intimate connexion with questions which are fiercely agitated at the present time.

SECTION I.

Let us first of all look at the evidence in support of Christ's right of dominion, as Mediator, over the nations of the earth.

His mediatorial authority over the *church* is readily and universally conceded. Nor is there any hesitation to admit that Christ, *as God*, exercises a sovereign control over the civil affairs of men. But that he does so in his *mediatorial* capacity seems not to approve itself so directly to the minds

of many. Yet a candid consideration of the proof which we have it in our power to bring forward, cannot fail, we think, to remove every shadow of doubt on this subject.

Indeed, the point in question might be argued, on the ground that Christ's investiture with mediatorial dominion does not suppose the abrogation of his necessary right of dominion as Lord. As before remarked, in assuming the office of Mediator, he did not divest himself of any thing belonging to him as divine. His moral authority over all creatures, as essential to his very being and character, never was, and never indeed could be, laid aside.—His moral fitness to exercise such dominion, might also have been insisted on.—The terms of absolute universality, as formerly shown, in which the mediatorial dominion is spoken of in the word of God, also imply what we have now in view. For if all things are delivered to him of his Father, if all power is given to him in heaven and in earth, if all things are put under his feet, it is not easy to see on what principle an exception could be pleaded for of any thing so vast and important as the civil associations of mankind.—Nay, the necessity, of such an extent of mediatorial power as includes the nations of the world, to his performing with efficiency the functions which belong to him even as Head of the church, is enough to set this question forever at rest. Without this, he could never open up a way for the diffusion of his gospel among the nations of the earth; could never either so subordinate their administration, or overrule their rebellion, as to bring about the period when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. But, without insisting on these points, in regard to which the evidence is of an inferential character; let us give our attention to the direct proof by which the dominion of Christ as Mediator over the nations of men is supported. By nations, of course, we mean civil associations; men existing in civil or political institutions; including the office-bearers by whom the laws are administered, as well as the people at large for whose good they are appointed to govern.

First. In looking into the word of God, we find subjection to Jesus Christ as Mediator directly enjoined upon civil rulers. 'Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye Judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and re-

joice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.'* The person to whom subjection is here enjoined, is doubtless the Messiah. 'The Son' is a title by which the Redeemer is often designated, both in the Old and New Testaments. If Solomon, the son of David, is referred to at all, it can only be in a very subordinate sense. We are at no loss to show that a greater than Solomon is here, even He who was at once David's Son and David's Lord,—the Son of David according to the flesh, but the Son of God by a high, necessary, and ineffable relationship. Again and again, throughout the New Testament, do we find passages from this psalm referred to Christ.† One may here suffice for the establishment of this point. 'And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God which hast made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who, by the mouth of thy servant David, hath said, Why did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.'

The Psalm, then, refers to Christ; but does it refer to him in his mediatorial capacity? There can be as little doubt, we think, on this point, if only the scope of the psalm itself, and the purposes for which it is elsewhere quoted, are candidly considered. The opposition of which he speaks, is opposition made to him as Mediator: as the Lord's Anointed; as He whom the Father hath set King upon his holy hill of Zion; in the same capacity, in short, in which he is to have the heathen given him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession.

And on whom is it that this psalm enjoins subjection to Prince Messiah? On 'kings,' and 'judges;' that is to say, civil rulers, supreme and subordinate. But is it civil rulers

* Ps. ii. 10—12.
† Acts. iv. 25, xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5—v. 5; Rev. ii. 27.

in their personal, or in their official capacity? There are some who evade the force of this passage by alleging that it is in their private character only they are here addressed. But this is contrary alike to the whole scope and design of the psalm, and to the concurrent testimony of the most judicious commentators. Indeed we have only to consider in what capacity it was that the opposition spoken of was offered to the Son by civil rulers. It was in their public character, undoubtedly, that Herod and Pontius Pilate conspired against the holy child Jesus; and we are only acting on the plain principles of fair interpretation, when we conclude that it is in their public and official character also, that civil rulers are here commanded to do homage to the Redeemer; —that kings and judges, *as such*, are required to serve the Lord with fear, and to kiss the Son lest he be angry.

Nor can there be a doubt that the *duties*, to which the terms in which these injunctions are expressed refer, involve the idea of complete moral subjection,—the subjection that inferiors owe to a superior, that subjects owe to a king. Such is the common meaning of the verb to 'serve,' as well as the sense in which it is often used in scripture. And one passage will be sufficient to show that to 'kiss' is expressive of loyal subjection to a reigning prince:—'Then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his (Saul's) head, and *kissed* him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?'*

Here, then, we have a most decided and unequivocal proof of the right of dominion over the nations of the earth which is possessed by the Messiah; for, had not such been his right, it is inconceivable that the Spirit of God should have enjoined subjection to him, as he here does, upon all civil rulers without exception, whether supreme or subordinate, whether belonging to Old or New Testament times. We have here a command of universal and permanent obligation; and while it retains its place in the word of God, it will be impossible to deny the dominion which Jesus as Mediator possesses over the nations of the earth and their rulers.

Secondly. Predictions respecting the kingdom of the Messiah, conduct us to the same conclusion. Predictions in general unfold the purposes and appointments of God.

* 1 Sam. x. 1.

Whatever, therefore, we find predicted regarding Christ, must be included in the grant of the Father to the Son. Now, dominion over the nations is matter of frequent announcement in prophecy.

The forty-seventh psalm is understood to refer to the Messiah. His exaltation to glory, the gathering of the Gentiles, and the ultimate establishment of his kingdom of righteousness and peace, form the subject of this beautiful ode. The ascension of the Redeemer is plainly referred to in the expression, 'God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.' Nor can it be doubted, from this circumstance itself, that it is in his official, and not his personal, character that he is spoken of throughout the psalm. Now, mark the expressions which are employed with regard to his dominion. He is described as 'a great king over all the earth;' as He who 'shall subdue the people under us, and the *nations* under our feet;' as He who 'reigneth over the *heathen*;' as He to whom 'the *princes* of the people are gathered together, even the people of the God of Abraham;' as He 'to whom belong the *shields* of the earth.'* These are not equivocal expressions. The nations and their princes are distinctly specified as brought under his control, and as doing him homage, which certainly imply a right of dominion over them; while magistrates who are set for the defence of the people, are undoubtedly meant by the shields of the earth, which are said to be his property.

The seventy-second psalm is, by universal consent, referred to Christ. In only a very inferior or subordinate sense can it be understood of Solomon. To whom but David's greater Son can its lofty descriptions be applicable? Of whom but the Messiah can it be affirmed that his name shall endure for ever; that men shall be blessed in him; and that all nations shall call him blessed? We may rest assured that the psalm celebrates the majesty, benignity, and dominion of Jesus as Mediator, with the glory, peacefulness, extent, and duration of his kingdom. Now, observe how many things are contained in it bearing on our present subject. 'The kings of Tarshish and of the Isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all na-

* Ps. xlvii. 2, 3, 8, 9.

tions shall serve him. All nations shall call him blessed.'* No language can more directly assert the doctrine for which we are contending. The Mediator, as such, is spoken of. Kings and nations are expressly introduced in their civil capacity as recognizing his dominion. And the acts of homage in which they are represented as engaging, are such as necessarily involve the idea of distinct moral subjection ;—namely, bringing presents, offering gifts, falling down before him, serving him, and calling him blessed. He who is the legitimate object of such acts must possess a rightful dominion over the nations and kings of the earth.

'Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people : and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing-fathers, and their queens thy nursing-mothers : they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and shall lick up the dust of thy feet.'† This seems a very decisive passage. The prophecy refers to New Testament times, when the Gentiles are to be gathered into the Redeemer. A prominent feature of these times shall be the subserviency of civil rulers to the church, which surely supposes their subjection to Christ her Head. *Kings shall be thy nursing-fathers*, is a similitude which imports the most tender care, the most endearing solicitude ; not mere protection, but active and unwearied nourishment and support. If, according to the opinions of some, the best thing the state can do for the church, is to let her alone ; to leave her to herself ; to take no interest in her concerns ; it is difficult to see how this view can be reconciled with the figure of a nurse, the duties of whose office would certainly be ill-discharged by such a treatment of her feeble charge. But to neutralize the force of this beautiful passage, it has been alleged that rulers are here spoken of, not in their public or official, but in their private or personal capacity. It is supposed to mean nothing more than that persons of exalted station shall become the devoted servants of Messiah, and take a deep and pious interest in the concerns of his kingdom. And this view is understood to be confirmed by the pronoun '*their*' occurring before

* Ps. lxxii. 10, 11, 17. † Is. xlix. 22, 23.

the word 'queens,' denoting, as is alleged, that they are spoken of, not as queens *regnant*, but as queens *consort*. It is, however, far from being self-evident that queens are spoken of here in the latter capacity; for every candid person will admit that the very same phraseology might as naturally be employed in speaking of queens regnant in relation to their husbands, as of kings regnant in relation to their wives. It is, therefore, not by any means clear that queens are here to be understood as consorts only. Nor, even admitting this, will the inference follow from it legitimately, that the kings are to be understood merely in their private domestic capacity as consorts of the queens.

When subjects pray for the blessing of God on their king and *his* queen, as they are every day in the habit of doing, the queen is of course queen-consort; but it surely cannot, for a moment be supposed that they do not refer to the monarch in his official capacity. Because his partner can only be viewed as associated with him in her private capacity. Yet, it is only on such a supposition as this, that the meaning we attach to the passage before us can be evaded. Even admitting, then, for the sake of argument, the interpretation proposed with regard to queens—that they are only referred to as consorts; the inference drawn from this with regard to kings does not follow. It does not follow that kings are referred to only in their private capacity. The kings may still, after all, be kings regnant: and the utmost that the passage can be made to bear is, that both kings and queens, whether regnant or consort, are bound to exert all the influence they possess, in their own proper spheres, to aid and foster the interests of Messiah's kingdom in the world. Because queens consort can do this only in their own proper sphere, it surely does not follow that kings regnant, in their proper sphere, are not also bound to do the same. On the contrary, the prediction before us leads us to conclude, that, in the times of the gospel, persons of the most exalted public stations shall exert their influence on behalf of the church of Christ; and this certainly supposes the subjection of such persons to Christ himself.

The same view is strongly corroborated by another passage in this prophecy. 'Therefore thy gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night; that men may bring unto thee the forces of the gentiles, and

that their kings may be brought. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the gentiles, and shalt suck the breasts of kings.'* Here there cannot be the shadow of a doubt about the sense in which kings are spoken of. The pronoun '*their*,' in this instance at least, is decidedly in favour of the view that they are to be regarded in their public capacity; they are spoken of as the people's kings, or kings in the possession and exercise of official power and influence. In this capacity they are represented as ministers to the church of Christ in various ways. Nor is the passage less decisive, that it comprehends a threat of awful judgment denounced on such nations and rulers as shall refuse to yield the service required. Surely, unless civil society had been placed under the dominion of the Mediator, there could have been no room for supposing, either that such duties are obligatory, or that such consequences shall follow the neglect of them.

'And it shall be the prince's part to give burnt offerings, and meat-offerings, and drink-offerings, in the feasts; and in the new moons, and in the Sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel.'† The remarkable prophetic vision, with which these words are connected, is, we believe, held by all judicious commentators to refer to the church in New Testament times. Without pretending minutely to explain the import of all the figurative allusions, the words we have quoted would seem plainly enough to carry in them the idea, that the civil ruler is to give public support to the institutions of the church of Christ, which, as in the case of the passages above quoted, necessarily implies that magistrates, as such, are under the authority of the Mediator.

'And I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, *nations*, and languages should serve him.'‡ The reference of this passage to Christ will not be doubted. The eternal Son of God, viewed with regard to his human nature and mediatorial character, is he who is called 'the Son of Man.' The power spoken of is

*Is. lx. 11, 12, 16. †Ezek. xlv. 17. ‡Dan. vii. 13, 14.

clearly mediatorial, as it is said to be 'given' him. It is also universal, including 'all nations,' of whom it is predicted that they should 'serve him,' which certainly supposes the possession of rightful authority over them.

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.'* The phrase, *the kingdoms of this world*, necessarily suggests the idea of social relations and civil rights—all those public interests and immunities, in short, which distinguish a compact civil body from a loose assemblage of private persons living in a disconnected state or individual capacity. All know that such is the idea attached to a *kingdom*. But the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of Christ. It must, therefore, be, in the same sense in which they are kingdoms in the one case, that they are to become kingdoms in the other. Now it is not the private sentiments or individual conduct of the inhabitants of a land, which gives character to a kingdom of this world, as such; neither can the adoption of Christian principles and practices, by the great bulk of a people, be sufficient to constitute the nation a kingdom of Christ. The nations of the world have, in their national capacity, too plainly acknowledged and served the god of this world. They have also, in too many instances, proclaimed themselves kingdoms of antichrist, giving their power and support directly to the beast, in their public social character. When the happy state of things announced in this prediction shall have been introduced, it is impossible to believe otherwise, than that these kingdoms shall, in the same public social capacity, become the kingdoms of Christ. And what does their becoming the kingdoms of Christ import? Certainly, at the very least, that for which we are now contending; namely, that in token of their subjection to him, they shall recognize his authority, and subordinate their interests to the advancement of his glory.

'And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. And they shall bring the glory of the nations into it.'† It is the church which is here spoken of as receiving the attention in question; but whether

* Rev. xi. 15. † Rev. xxi. 24, 26.

in its millennial or celestial state, commentators are not agreed. Whichever of these views is taken, however, the passage before us must be understood as describing a course of preparation that takes place on earth, as it is only in this world that national and official distinctions exist. Now, if nations, as such, are to walk in the light of the New Jerusalem, that is to say, are to derive distinguished honour and privileges from the church of Christ, they must surely be regarded as under the dominion of the church's Head. And if kings, as such, are to bring their glory and honour into it, that is to say, are to subordinate their authority, power, revenues, and whole administration to the interests of Christ's kingdom, they also must be regarded as under the dominion of the Messiah.

Such is the voice of prophecy on this interesting subject. Every unprejudiced mind must admit that it bears decided testimony to the doctrine we are now attempting to establish. Many more passages might have been quoted. Indeed, the whole tenor of Old Testament prediction speaks the same language. No one, therefore, who has any respect for the word of God, can hesitate to admit that Christ possesses mediatorial dominion over the nations of the earth.*

Thirdly. Another set of proofs will be found in numerous designations, implying dominion over the nations,

* 'God addresses the nations in a collective capacity, reproves them for their idolatry, and calls them to his worship, Is. xxxiv. 1; xli. 1, 21—29. He proposes Christ, as his anointed servant to them; chap. xliii. 1; declares that he has given him the nations for his inheritance, and that he shall inherit them all; Ps. ii. 8; lxxxii. 8; Is. liii. 15; lv. 5. Christ addresses himself, not only to individuals, but to whole islands; Is. xliv. 1; nations join themselves to him; Is. ii. 2; Mic. iv. 1, 2; Zech. ii. 11; viii. 20—22, bless themselves, and glory in him; Jer. iv. 2; all nations and dominions serve him; Dan. vii. 14, 27. They consecrate all things in them, and employ them in his service; Is. lx. 6—12; Zech. xiv. 20, 21; he owns these nations as his, and blesses them, while he breaks in pieces and wastes others, Ps. xxxiii. 12; cxlv. 15; Is. xix. 25; Ps. ii. 9, 12; Is. lx. 12. The force of the argument arising from these and similar predictions, is such that Mr. Edward Williams, although an independent, acknowledges that they imply a national profession and establishment of Christianity. In answer to the objection, 'If the above prophecies refer to *national conversions*, does not that lead to *national churches*:' he replies, 'That a national establishment, if WELL ORDERED, appears more agreeable to the prophetic passages we have been considering than the anti-pædo-baptist plan; nay, more agreeable to the general tenor of revelation.'—*M'Crie.*

which are given to Christ in the scriptures. Such are the following:—'For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is GOVERNOR AMONG THE NATIONS.'* That the psalm in which this occurs refers to Christ, we need not wait to prove; and that it refers to him as Mediator, is evinced by the whole tenor of the composition itself. His being called in the verse *Lord* or *Jehovah*, is not inconsistent with this view, as the same high appellation is applied to him in other parts of scripture. It cannot be doubted that the preceding verse foretells the extension of the church of Christ. 'All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.' And, as what immediately follows is introduced as accounting for the universal spread of the kingdom of Messiah, it must be considered as referring to the same illustrious personage. 'For the kingdom is the Lord's; and he is the governor among the nations.' Here, then, is a glorious title, distinctly recognizing the dominion of the Mediator over the nations of men—a title which the nations, indeed, may overlook, but which they cannot disregard with impunity, and which shall be one day as fully acknowledged by them as it has been hitherto shamefully neglected and despised.

The eighty-ninth psalm refers to Messiah. He is the chosen of the Father, with whom he has made a covenant, whose seed he will establish forever, and whose throne he will build up to all generations. Now, mark what he says of him in the course of this psalm;—'I will make him my first-born, HIGHER THAN THE KINGS OF THE EARTH.'† Here is another glorious title. His being to be *made* what the title imports, determines in what character it belongs to him. It must be as Mediator that the Son of God is here described as, '*made* higher than the kings of the earth. In the sense of natural superiority he *is* 'higher,' and needs not to be *made*: in the sense of official supremacy only, then, can this phrase be understood. Besides, the words might have been rendered *most high* or *supreme over the kings of the earth.* The very same term (עֶלְיוֹן) is often used to express the supremacy of God, and is translated 'Most high.' The dominion of Messiah over civil rulers

* Ps. xxii. 28. † Ps. lxxxix. 27.

on the one hand, and the subjection of such to him on the other, are thus clearly imported in this title.

In the prophecy of Jeremiah, there occurs the following passage: 'Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. Who would not fear thee, O KING OF NATIONS?'* *Nations* here mean organized civil bodies. *King* is a title of office, expressive of supreme rule or government. He to whom this title belongs is the true and living God, the God of Israel as distinguished from heathen idols. But as the God of Israel is God in Christ, the title may be regarded as equally applicable to the Redeemer.

Should any hesitate, however, to admit this inference, the same excuse for so doing cannot be urged in respect of the next proof we have to adduce. The exile of Patmos, while introducing his apocalyptic vision, under the influence of the Spirit, speaks of Jesus Christ as 'THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH.'† The whole context, not to speak of the very verse in which the title occurs, determines the reference to the mediatorial character of our Redeemer,—that character, namely, in which he bore faithful witness as a prophet, rose from the dead, and washed us from our sins in his blood. There is no room to doubt for a moment that it is Christ as Mediator who is spoken of as ὁ αρχων των βασιλεων της γης. The persons who are here supposed to be subject to Christ, are kings, civil rulers, supreme and subordinate, all in civil authority, whether in the legislative, judicial, or executive branches of government. Of such Jesus Christ is Prince;—ὁ αρχων, ruler, lord, chief, the first in power, authority, and dominion.

The most splendid title of all remains to be noticed. It occurs twice in the Revelation of John. 'These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is LORD OF LORDS, AND KING OF KINGS.' 'His name is called the word of God—and he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS'‡—Κυριος κυριων και Βασιλευς βασιλεων. The whole book of Revelation relates to Christ as Mediator. The sublime predictions, in which this resplendent title is ascribed to him, treat of the last struggle betwixt Christ and

* Jer. x. 6, 7. † Rev. i. 5. ‡ Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 16.

his enemies, in which these enemies are to be finally subdued and their opposition to him to be buried in oblivion. He, by whom the victory is to be secured, is the same who is spoken of, in the forty-fifth psalm, 'girding his sword upon his thigh, and in his majesty riding prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness!' and, in the prophecy of Isaiah, as 'coming up with dyed garments from Bozrah, red in his apparel, and his garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat.' It is 'the faithful and true, who in righteousness doth judge and make war.' He is represented, as head of the church, sitting on 'a white horse;' while, as Head over all things to the church, he is described as 'having on his head many crowns, as clothed with a vesture dipped in blood, as smiting the nations with a sharp sword, ruling them with a rod of iron, treading the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, and having on his vesture and on his thigh the name written, King of kings and Lord of lords.' There is nothing equivocal here. The Messiah is exhibited as waging war with the kings of the earth, who oppose his reign: and his right to do so, is plainly involved in the title which is conspicuously inscribed on his vestment—a title not more fraught with terror to those who oppose his dominion, than conformatory, of his official supremacy over civil rulers of every description.

The proof of the mediatorial dominion over the nations derived from these sources—from commands, predictions, and designations—is so abundant, varied, direct, and complete, that we cannot but express our surprize the doctrine in question should ever have been denied or overlooked. After what has been said, there may be few who will venture formally to impugn this precious doctrine; but it cannot escape observation, that there are many, very many, who are in the habit of constantly neglecting it. This is the case to a mournful extent, not only with the nations and their rulers, whom it greatly concerns to recognize and act upon it; but with private Christians who profess to be concerned for the mediatorial honours of their Redeemer. That it should be so, is much to be deplored, and is, to a considerable extent, unaccountable. How dishonouring to Christ thus to attempt to tear from his head the crown of the nations! And how blind to their own true interests, even, are those who thus provoke the Lord to anger, and

expose themselves to the withering frown of his sovereign displeasure!

To the doctrine thus established, no solid objection can be made. Standing as it does on such a basis of scripture evidence, it bids defiance to every argument which prejudice, or self-interest, or perverted reason can muster against it. Yet it has been violently assailed in some quarters: but the grounds on which this opposition has proceeded, have, for the most part, been already overturned.

It has been supposed, for example, to exclude Jehovah, essentially considered, from the government of the nations. This objection is just a branch of the common objection which is brought against the mediatorial government altogether, and which has already been sufficiently answered. We repeat, that delegation does not involve the surrender of power; and Messiah's dominion over the nations being of a delegated character, it does not at all follow that when the Father committed this power to the Son he parted with it himself. Indeed, it is with the mediatorial power over the nations as it is with that over the church; and as the latter certainly does not interfere with the essential dominion of God, no more does the former.

Equally vain is it to object that the doctrine in question is at variance with the views that civil society originates with God, as the God of nature. True, civil society is founded in nature, and not in grace: but its subjection to Christ is not the least inconsistent with this. The objection will be found to carry farther than, perhaps, its friends were aware of; for if every thing that springs from the law of nature is to be excluded from the dominion of the Messiah, many things must be excepted which they have been accustomed to admit as under that dominion. Marriage originates in a law of nature: does it follow that parties united in this relation are to have no regard to the authority and honour of the Redeemer, that they are not to be guided by his law, or to act under the influence of his grace? 'Let him that marrieth, marry only *in the Lord*.' —The domestic relation has its foundation in the law of nature: are parents and children, masters and servants, at liberty to regard themselves as not under subjection to the Redeemer? What, then, are we to make of those commands which require parents 'to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of *the Lord*?' chil-

dren to 'obey their parents *in the Lord;* and servants to be obedient to them that are their masters '*as unto Christ?*' Nay, are there not even some prominent parts of religion, such as prayer and praise, which have their foundation in nature, and in which we are certainly not at liberty, much less bound, to have no respect to Christ as Mediator? On the same principle, then, it by no means follows, because nations originate in nature, which we freely admit that they do, that they are not placed under Christ: or, in other words, it is no objection to the dominion of Christ over the nations, that civil society springs from God, as the God of nature.

But the most specious objection is derived from what is matter of fact. The nations do not acknowledge Christ. They are, many of them at least, in a state of open rebellion against him. Not a few of them have given their power to the Beast,—to the avowed enemy of the Messiah. 'The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us.' But, as before remarked, right and acknowledgment are different things,; and the former is not dependent on the latter. On the one hand an unlawful usurper may be acknowledged, but this can never confer on him the right to rule. On the other hand, acknowledgment may be refused to one whose right of dominion rests on the most solid foundation. It is easy to see that if acknowledgment was necessary to establish right, neither the Messiah's dominion over the *church*, nor Jehovah's moral government of *the world* could be established, as there are many, who, not only refuse to recognize, but pointedly dispute, both the one and the other. Because 'we see not yet all things put under him,' as respects active moral subjection, we are not to consider the statement as invalidated that the Father 'hath put all things in subjection under his feet,' as respects his right of sovereignty.

SECTION II.

The fact, then, of the mediatorial dominion over the nations, stands irrefragable, and we may proceed, without

hesitation, to consider the acts of Christ's administration toward this class of subjects.

First. Although civil society originates with God as the God of nations, nations may even be said, in a certain sense, to derive their very existence from Christ. The origin of civil society and political government, is a subject which has given rise to much speculation. Whether they originate with God or with man, and in what sense they can be said to originate with either or with both, are topics that admit of extensive discussion but into which we do not feel ourselves called at present to enter. The scriptures, it may be proper to remark, represent civil government as at once an 'ordinance of *God* and an ordinance of *man*.'* In as far as it is the right of the people to fix the constitution, to elect the rulers, and to revise and amend the system under which they live, civil government may be regarded as an ordinance of *man*. But it is not to be inferred from this, that it depends solely on the will of man whether civil institutions should be set up in a country at all, that civil society originates wholly in voluntary compact, or that whatever is sanctioned by the public will is necessarily right, and consequently obligatory. The most frightful results would follow from admitting such an absolute sovereignty of the people as this. There are too many instances on record, of the great body of the people having gone egregiously astray, ever to permit us to give our unqualified assent to such a principle. Indeed, it is manifestly absurd, to suppose that the majority of a nation are free from the moral control of the law and authority of God, in the formation of their civil institutions. This were to ascribe to an aggregate body, composed of moral subjects who are individually responsible, a proud, and irreligious, and irresponsible independence of the will of the great moral Governor himself; a supposition so monstrous that, however much overlooked in practice, every one must shrink from it in theory. It is admitted that God has invested the people with power in political matters, and the people of course have a right to the exercise of this power; but it is at the same time to be attentively observed that *he has given them a law* by which they are to be regulated in the use of this delegated power, and it is only when they act according to this standard that

* Rom. xiii. 2; 1 Pet. ii. 13.

their determinations and institutions possess the sanction and obligation of righteousness.

Civil government can be the ordinance of *man*, in no sense that is inconsistent with its being strictly and properly the ordinance of *God*. Now, it is not merely in regard to his over-ruling providence that it is the ordinance of God. In this respect, indeed, 'the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men: he removeth kings and setteth up kings.' But, in this sense, the grossest tyranny and misrule might also be regarded as the ordinance of God. Civil government originates with him *morally* not less than *providentially*. It is the *moral ordinance* of God. It is a *divine institution*. The principles, by which its formation and management are to be regulated, are distinctly laid down in the Bible. Lawful magistrates, whether supreme or subordinate, are hence to be regarded as 'the ministers of God;' not as the mere creatures and servants of men, but the authorized vicegerents of heaven.

Nor, in saying that the nations may be regarded as deriving their existence from Christ, do we advance any thing at variance with what we have now laid down. This is perfectly consistent with maintaining, as we do, that civil government proceeds from God, not as the God of grace, but as the God of nature. We admit that it springs from him as the supreme moral Governor of the universe, having its foundation in natural principles which belong to the constitution of man. National society, political government, magistratical authority, all originate in the moral government of God as the God of nature, and not in the mediatorial system. These might all have existed, had there never been a mediatorial economy; nay, they do often exist where the economy of grace is quite unknown. We are anxious not to be misunderstood on this point.

At the same time it must not be forgotten, that, as we have already shown, God has placed the management of the whole affairs of the moral universe in the hands of his Son as Mediator. The dispensations of Providence in general, in all their extent and in all their bearings, are put under his feet; in consequence of which, such dispensations as give rise to the existence of nations, or regulate their political aspects and interests, may fairly be viewed as managed and directed by him. And not only so; but civil go-

vernment, as a moral ordinance of God, is put under the Redeemer's feet; and, in as far also as this is the case, nations may be regarded as deriving their being from Christ. It is, therefore, not enough to say that nations owe their existence to God. This is true: but it is not the whole truth on this subject. They are to be regarded as originating in the will, authority, and appointment of the Messiah. We find it, indeed, said, 'There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God;' but this must be in consistency with the proclamation which we also find issuing from the Mediator, 'By ME kings reign, and princes decree justice: by ME princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.'*

Nations are thus invested with a high and noble character. They are the moral subjects of the Redeemer. Their rulers are to be recognized, not as the mere servants of men, the creatures of popular choice, but as the ministers of God, the moral deputies of heaven, the servants, the representatives, the vicegerents of the Prince of the kings of the earth. This gives them a peculiar official elevation and dignity; throws a moral grandeur around their character; lays them under special obligations to attend to their moral qualifications and conduct; and entitles them to be treated by the people with profound esteem, veneration, and honour.

Secondly. Messiah watches over and directs all occurrences connected with the nations. National concerns are numerous, great and diversified. The origin of national associations, whether it be warlike aggression, internal revolution, arbitrary usurpation, or voluntary compact, involves a vast variety of interests and events. So is it also with the progress of nations, whether this is connected with the management of internal and foreign relations, the counsels of statesmen, the conduct of generals, or the prowess of armies. Nor is it less so with the circumstances which occasion the dissolution of states. Yet these, in all their aspects and bearings, are ordered and controlled by the Mediator. They form prominent parts of that universal providence which, as before shown, is placed under the Messiah. The wheels of providence, in all their intricacy, are propelled by the God-man, Mediator. And, as for that department of providential arrangements which respects the

* Prov. viii. 15, 16.

nations, the control of Messiah over this is fully illustrated and confirmed in the Apocalypse. The events unfolded in the prophetical part of this book, have all a respect to the nations of the earth in general, and more especially to such as are connected with the Roman empire, the fourth great monarchy, in whose decline and fall are involved the interests of the principal European powers which have become too closely incorporated with antichrist. But these events are represented as developed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, the divine Mediator, who opens the sealed book of God's purposes respecting the nations, blows the trumpets of divine warning, and pours forth the phials of Jehovah's wrath ;—thus carrying forward the scheme of predetermined decrees, till Babylon the great is overthrown, till all thrones of iniquity are overturned in his downfall, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ.

Thirdly. Jesus, as king of nations, exacts obedience to his commands. The moral law and all the precepts of scripture are administered by Christ. Communities, as well as individuals, it must be admitted, are under the divine law. Such commands, therefore, as are found in the word of God, applicable to nations and their rulers, must be regarded as issuing from the divine Mediator, who is invested with all possible sovereignty and power ;—with not merely physical control, but moral dominion. It follows, that wherever we find nations commanded to serve the Lord, and civil rulers required to promote the public good—to restrain evil—to administer the laws with equity, impartiality and benevolence—to set a good example in intelligence, morality, and religion—and to give countenance, protection, and aid to the church, we are to recognize the authority of the Redeemer. Although the duties of subjects are, perhaps, more frequently inculcated in scripture than those of rulers ; yet it must not be forgotten that neither the qualifications nor duties of rulers are entirely overlooked. And if rulers are, as we have shown, under moral subjection to Messiah, in those passages of scripture which prescribe their qualifications and duties, they are to consider themselves as addressed by the Redeemer. Such are the following :—'Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment :

but ye shall hear the small as well as the great: ye shall not be afraid of the face of man: for the judgment is God's. Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, and they shall judge the people with just judgment. He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. Be wise now, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. He is the minister of God to thee for good. He beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.'* These and similar precepts and prescriptions, if all power is given to Christ, must be regarded as emanating from the mediatorial throne, and as enforced by the gracious but sovereign authority of the Redeemer. It follows that national communities and civil office-bearers, who disregard or neglect them, are guilty, not only of a contravention of the people's rights, but of rebellion against Jesus, the King of nations.

Fourthly. And here we have another act of Christ's regal administration, for this rebellion he overrules for good. The nations oft-times refuse to serve him. 'The kings of the earth have set themselves, and the rulers taken counsel together, against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast their cords from us.' Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, is not the only king who has made his people to sin; Herod and Pontius Pilate not the only rulers who have 'of a truth conspired' against Jesus of Nazareth. National honour and personal aggrandizement are more commonly the objects they pursue than the glory of God, the honour of Christ, or the good of his people. His prescribed qualifications are not seldom contemptuously disregarded, and his commands trampled under foot. The power with which they are invested is too often employed to persecute and oppress his church, and to support his enemies. 'The ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings. These have one mind, and shall give their

* Deut. i. 16, 17; xvi. 18; 2 Sam. xiii. 3; Ps. ii. 10, 11; lxxxii. 2—4; Rom. xiii. 3, 4.

power and strength unto the beast.'* But all this is overruled for the accomplishment of ultimate good by the divine Mediator. He makes the wrath of man to praise him. The nations and their rulers may refuse to serve him, but they cannot prevent him from serving himself by them. By their counsels and treaties, their ambitious wars and lawless transactions, he can fulfil his own sovereign purposes. Their conspiracy against his rights, he causes to issue in the development of the weight of his arm; their persecution of his church, in her purification; and the countenance they afford to his enemies, in the chastisement and overthrow of his impenitent foes. The Assyrian is the rod of his anger; and when he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, he executes by him his own righteous decrees. But for this comforting assurance, what friend of the Redeemer could look abroad, without the most gloomy forebodings, on the tyranny, oppression, blasphemy, and iniquity, of every sort and degree, which are practised among the nations of the world, under the convenient cloak of civil power. 'The Lord, Jehovah-Jesus, reigneth. He rules in the midst of his enemies. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea: though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.'

Fifthly. Christ, as Mediator, executes the righteous judgments of God on wicked nations and rulers. 'The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son. The Father hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.' The treasures of wrath, as well as those of grace, are at his disposal. We read not only of 'the wrath of *God*,' but of 'the wrath of the *Lamb*.' Nor are they merely the solemnities of the final judgment that are to be administered by him, but those judicial dispensations which are unfolded in the providential occurrences of the present state. Among these, the judgments inflicted on civil communities stand conspicuous. The moral character of nations, and the moral responsibility of rulers, show the possibility of national and official sins. By cherishing a spirit of pride, self-confidence, and independence of God; by practising ty-

* Rev. xvii. 12, 13

ranny, cruelty, and oppression; by indulging a perverse, ungrateful, and turbulent temper; by prostituting their power and influence to the encouragement and support of irreligion, blasphemy, and immorality; or by employing the sceptre and the sword in hostile opposition to the tenets and institutions of true religion;—civil communities may be guilty of such heinous iniquity as to call forth the retributive judgments of God. National crime, when carried to a height, operates as a conductor to draw down the lightning of vengeance from the eternal throne. And what we would wish to be remarked is, that it is the province of the King of nations to execute these judgments. He is the mediatorial Angel, described in the apocalypse, as 'taking the censor, and filling it with fire of the altar, and casting it upon the earth,' causing 'voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.'* These judgments, whether they consist in a dark and confounding infatuation, seizing hold of the thoughts and counsels of men in power; or in a sudden paralyzing of the hearts of the people, by which they are disarmed of all their wonted fortitude, and reduced to a state of the most cowardly and effeminate timidity; or in the pressure and succession of those fearful calamities which induce ignominy, disorganization, and ruin; or in those terrible things in righteousness, by which the Almighty speaks to the guilty and makes bare his holy arm against the workers of iniquity:—whether they be brought about by the whirlwind of war, by the blast of famine, by the withering breath of pestilence, or by the earthquake of popular commotion; in whatsoever they consist, by what means soever they are brought about, they are the doings of Him who is Governor among the nations. In general, we are assured, with regard to rebellious princes, that 'He shall speak to them in wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure; shall break them with a rod of iron, and shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.' 'The Lord shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath; he shall fill the places with dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.'† 'The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.' By whom this sentence is carried into execution, we are not left to conjecture. 'Who is this that cometh

* Rev. viii. 5. † Ps. ii, 5; cx, 5, 6.

from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, *mighty to save.* Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.'* Here we have the almighty Saviour executing the most awful judgments on his enemies. With regard, in particular, to those great empires, prefigured in Nebuchadnezzar's image, the Chaldean, the Medo-Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman, we know that it is the kingdom of the Messiah, under the government, of course, of its glorious Head and Prince, that 'shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms.'† While, with respect to the judgments already executed, or yet to be executed, on the kingdoms of the Roman empire, the nations of the Latin earth, we find them directly and unequivocally ascribed to the same source. 'He that overcometh,' saith the Son of God, 'and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the *nations*, (and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers) even as I received of my Father.—The kings of the earth hid themselves from the wrath of the *Lamb*, and out of his mouth goeth a sharp, two-edged sword, that with it he should smite the *nations:* and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.'‡ We are thus warranted, nay bound, to believe that those occurrences, by which guilty nations are scourged and chastised for their sins, are not merely brought about in providence, but ordered and directed by the Mediator, who inflicts upon them the just award of their sins. And whether, therefore, we behold the desolating sword cutting off the inhabitants, or the blasting mildew destroying the crops, or commercial stagnation obstructing the sources of wealth, or wasting disease stalking with ghastly power over a land,

* Is. lx. 12; lxiii. 1—4. † Dan. ii. 44.
‡ Rev. ii. 26, 27; vi. 15, 16; xix. 15.

or the upheavings of popular commotion overturning the foundations of social order, it is not a little interesting to look beyond secondary causes and recognize the wisdom, and might, and righteous retribution of Prince Messiah, carrying into execution the divine decree, *The nation and kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish: yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.*

Sixthly. The Prince of the kings of the earth, opens up a way for the universal dissemination and success of his gospel among the nations. That the religion of the cross is to be universally diffused, has already been seen. This supposes that the ministers of Christ are to circulate throughout the nations, making overtures of reconciliation to their inhabitants, and urging upon them the claims of their divine Sovereign. 'Go ye and teach *all nations*, baptizing them,' &c., is the command of the Redeemer to his ministering servants. But, it is only in virtue of his sovereignty over the nations, that he could issue such a mandate: and this only could warrant those invested with this commission to demand admission for themselves and reception for their message among all the nations under heaven. When the ambassadors of Jesus visit foreign lands, to disseminate the knowledge of the gospel, however exclusive the laws and strict the prohibitions of these lands against foreign intrusion, they cannot be regarded as lawless aggressors. Jealous potentates may refuse to acknowledge the King in whose name they come; and the subservient functionaries of these potentates may use every means to shut them out from their dominions: but they have a right to enter, and as faithful and authorized ambassadors, a right to negociate with the inhabitants of all lands in behalf of their Sovereign Lord. It may be their duty to use caution, and exercise prudence, in introducing themselves into heathen kingdoms, that they may not unnecessarily offend the prejudices of those with whom they have to transact. But still they are to regard themselves as fully entitled to be heard, in the name of Him by whom they are sent. By the sovereignty of their Lord they are spared the moral degradation of feeling that they are doing what is illegal,—that they are violating the principles of international law,—that they are acting the part of contraband traders. What they are doing may be unauthorized by man, may be contrary

even to the will and command of the rulers of those regions of the earth into which they have gone: but they proceed in the name of One whose authority extends over all nations, who claims all the kings of the earth as his subjects, and whose commands can not, without rebellion, be disputed. He has said to them, 'Go and teach all nations:' and, when the jealousy of heathen princes interferes to impede them in the execution of this commission, by arresting them on the confines of their territory, and commanding them to 'depart from their coasts,' they are at liberty to refuse, and to plead as an excuse for so doing their obligation to obey God rather than man. Without the supremacy of Christ over the nations, however, the missionaries of the cross could have no right thus to penetrate into all lands;—the apostolic commission could not, indeed, be lawfully executed. But, in consequence of this supremacy, they may circumnavigate the globe, may touch at every island that studs the ocean, may make a descent on every coast, may pass every boundary, may knock at the gates of every palace, may address every crowned head, may pervade the length and breadth of every kingdom, and ask admission, in name of the King of kings, for themselves and their message, of every inhabitant of the earth.

Nor is the right of his ambassadors to proceed, the only thing that is secured by the Messiah's headship over the nations. Provision is thus made for the opening up of a way, for the success of their cause, and the protection of their persons. There may be much in the prejudices, the opinions, the habits, and the manners, of the inhabitants, in their legal institutions and superstitious rites, to present barriers to the introduction of the pure and self-denying religion of Jesus: but, notwithstanding all, the Prince of the kings of the earth can open a way for his own cause in the midst of all obstructions. Nothing can baffle his counsel: nothing withstand his might. Difficulties disappear at his approach: before him mountains become a plain. 'He hath the key of David; he openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth. Behold,' says he, 'I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.'* Yes; the herald of salvation in foreign lands may have numerous discouragements, and may often find reason

* Rev. iii. 7, 8.

to say, with the great apostle of the Gentiles, 'there are many adversaries;' but, believing in the dominion of Christ over the nations, he need not despair, like him also, of being enabled to add, 'a great door and effectual is opened unto me.'*

Seventhly. It is thus easy to see, how the mediatorial dominion over the nations is connected with the gathering of a church, and the setting up of a spiritual kingdom in the midst of them. The preservation of this church, the protection of this kingdom, is another purpose for which Christ wields the mediatorial sceptre. There is much, very much, in the nature and spirit of the civil institutions set up among men, which tends to endanger the Redeemer's covenant-society. The indifference with which her interests are regarded, and the seductive attempts made to induce her to barter away her spiritual liberties, and to permit herself to be degraded into a political engine, not to speak of the positive hostility with which she may be directly assailed, are evils against which she requires to be guarded, and to which, if left to herself, she would be sure to fall a prey. There is so much, in the doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion, that is opposed to the immoral principles and practices, patronized and acted upon by the nations of the world in general, that she could not continue to exist among them uncorrupted and independent, unless protected by One who can control, modify, and overrule, all their counsels and doings. Without this, the church would not long be tolerated pure and unfettered; but would either be crushed beneath the iron rod of despotic power, or be extirpated by the flames of persecution. To her blessed and glorious King, who is Governor among the nations, is she indebted for so overruling the hearts and conduct of men in power, as to throw around her a shield of safety. Considering the dangers of the church, and the character of the nations, we could have no hope of her continuing to subsist, were it not for the feature of mediatorial dominion now under review.

Eighthly. It only here remains to notice, that, in this capacity, the Mediator will ultimately bring about an entire change in the character and constitution of the nations of the world. To the fulfilment of scripture prophecy, such a

* 1 Cor. xvi. 9.

change is indispensable. At present, they are all, more or less, in a state of hostility to the Redeemer; either sunk in criminal apathy, or deeply impregnated with pagan and antichristian leaven. A most numerous and influential class have given their power and strength to the Beast. The authority and law of the Redeemer are not regarded; his glory is not contemplated; and the true interests of his church are opposed or forgotten. It will be otherwise, however, in the end. When the period arrives, when 'kings shall be nursing fathers and their queens nursing-mothers' to the church; when 'the Zion of the Holy One of Israel shall suck the breasts of kings;' when 'the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ;' when this period arrives, surely the nations of this earth will assume an aspect very different from the present. The basis of their organization will then be the word of God, and the aim of their administration, the glory of Christ; their officers shall be peace and their executors righteousness; and the spirit which shall pervade all their actions, shall be the pure spirit of the gospel. By whom is this extraordinary change to be effected? How is this marvellous revolution to be brought about? By the overruling providence and gracious energy of Him who is Governor among the nations. He will shake all nations with the thunder of his power, till every thing connected with them that is opposed to his cause is overthrown, and they are led to hail himself 'as the Desire of all nations.' He will purge out the leaven of infidelity and antichristianism with searching scrutiny, and liberally infuse the opposite principles till they leaven the whole lump. He will overturn, overturn, overturn, till He come whose right it is; and he will give it him. The secular tyrannies of the Latin Earth shall be broken to pieces, shall become like the chaff of the summer thrashing floor, and be carried away by the wind, till no place be found for them; and the kingdoms that shall succeed, will be actuated with the spirit of that kingdom, which is represented by the stone cut out without hands, which is to become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. Thus to purify, sanctify, revolutionize, nay Christianize, the nations of the world, is what none but He could perform, and were it not that he is Head of the nations, as well as Head of the church, we should despair of these glorious anticipations being ever realized.

SECTION III.

If it is admitted that the Messiah is invested with dominion over the nations, toward which, in consequence of such investment, he performs the acts of administration, of which we have been speaking, it follows, as a natural and unavoidable inference, that there are duties which the nations owe to the Mediator.

If the Mediator is King of nations, nations are the subjects of the Mediator, and all the duties of subjects to their prince must be held due from them to the Messiah. It is vain to plead exemption from moral responsibility for body politics, or civil office-bearers, as such. Associations, composed of such as are morally responsible individually, must be morally responsible collectively. An aggregate of moral subjects must itself possess a moral character. Every society of moral beings is itself a moral being or subject. Deny this, and then, those who are singly and privately under the obligation of the moral law, have nothing more to do, in order to escape from the trammels of such obligation, than to form themselves into an association, or to get themselves invested with an official character. That a nation is not a responsible moral subject, is thus a sentiment, monstrously inconsistent in itself, and fraught with consequences of the most hideous description. By means of its laws and its rulers, a nation is capable of putting forth acts as strictly of a moral character as those of any individual. This view of the matter is not more consonant with sound reason than with scripture: for we there read, in express terms, of 'an ungodly nation;' 'an hypocritical nation;' 'a rebellious nation.'* The same principle is admitted in the common language of mankind. We are accustomed every day to speak of national virtue, national honour, national faith, national sin; phraseology which distinctly recognizes the moral character and obligation of nations, as such. Nor is it at all difficult to conceive, how every precept of the dialogue may be as expressly kept or violated by a body politic as by a private individual. Such being the

* Ps. xliii. 1; Is. x. 6; Ezek. ii. 3.

case, we can be at no loss to perceive, either that nations are under moral obligations to Christ, or what are the specific duties they owe to him.

First. It must be the duty of nations and their rulers to have respect to the glory of Christ in all their institutions and transactions. No principle can less admit of dispute than that it is the duty of subjects to honour their king: and if Christ is King of nations, and magistrates subjects of the Messiah, they must be held bound, in virtue of their relative characters, to pay all possible respect to his honour and glory. The spirit of the divine command —'Honour the King,' carries in it thus much. Indeed, from the relation in which we all stand to God, we are bound to have respect to his honour in every thing as the grand end of our being. 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' On the same principle, kingdoms and civil rulers, from the relation in which they stand to the Redeemer, are bound to subordinate all that belongs to them to *his* honour. It is not enough that they have respect to the public good, to the promotion of social order and happiness among men; such is, doubtless, the grand immediate end they are to contemplate; but, as moral and responsible subjects, they are, even in seeking this end, to look higher, and to have an ultimate regard to the honour of Him to whom they owe their being, preservation, and powers. Like all other moral creatures, they are to have respect to the highest possible end in all that they do; and certainly no end can they ever propose to themselves, at all so dignified and illustrious as the display of the glorious excellency of the Prince of the kings of the earth, who possesses undisputed sovereignty over all. This object, therefore, they are bound to keep distinctly before them, in the formation of their constitution; in the establishment of their various institutions; in the shaping of their policy, whether domestic or foreign; in the selection and appointment of their functionaries, whether supreme or subordinate; in their legislative enactments; and in all their separate acts of administration. Not an establishment are they at liberty to set up; not a law are they entitled to pass; not a step are they free to take; not an alliance are they permitted to form, without having supreme regard to this high and glorious end. Hostility, or even indifference to this, partakes of the very essence of rebellion

against their sovereign Lord. The true feeling of loyal subjection to a lawful prince, requires more than a mere selfish regard to the subject's own immediate interests: a devoted regard to the Prince's honour, and a willingness to maintain his dignity against every infringement, enter essentially into the nature of loyalty. Was it not for disregard of this, that Nebuchadnezzar of old was subjected to the fearful punishment by which he was driven from among men, and had his dwelling with the beasts of the field, until seven times passed over him? 'The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, Thy kingdom is departed from thee; and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, until *thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.*' And what was the crime for which the impious Belshazzar had the ominous sentence so miraculously inscribed against him? 'Thou hast praised the gods of silver and gold, of brass, iron, wood, and stone, which see not, nor hear, nor know; and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, *hast thou not glorified.*' These are cases which it well becomes civil communities and their office-bearers, however exalted, deeply to ponder, not only as involving by implication the duty of nations to consult the glory of the Messiah in all things, but as holding out a solemn warning of the danger to which the neglect or violation of this duty necessarily exposes. And, oh! when we reflect, how little reason we have to suppose, that, in the great majority of national concerns and transactions, this end is at all regarded by civil communities, we may well tremble at the fearful retribution that awaits them if they repent not. How few, alas! of those who conduct public affairs in the political world, give evidence of being actuated by the high motive in question. A sincere patriotic regard to the good of the community, is the highest object to which, in general, any ever pretended to have respect; and there is reason to fear that not seldom they come far short even of this: while a regard for the glory of Messiah the Prince is neither thought of nor professed.

Secondly. It is the duty of nations, as the subjects of

Christ, to take his law as their rule. They are apt to think it enough that they take, as their standard of legislation and administration, human reason, natural conscience, public opinion, or political expediency. None of these, however, nor indeed all of them together, can supply a sufficient guide in affairs of state. Of course, heathen nations, who are not in possession of the revealed will of God, must be regulated by the law of nature: but this is no good reason why those who have a revelation of the divine will should be exempted from its obligation in civil matters, and restricted to the use of a more imperfect rule. It is absurd to contend that, because civil society is founded in nature, men are to be guided, in directing its affairs and consulting its interests, solely by the light of nature. Might not the same be said with as much propriety of many other relations of human life, such as parents and children, husbands and wives, masters and servants,—the duties of which we never think of exempting from the control of a preternatural revelation? Nay, might it not, with equal propriety, be maintained, as was formerly hinted, that, as certain religious duties, such as prayer and praise, are founded in nature, we are in the performance of them to have no respect either to the authority or directions of the holy scriptures? The truth is, that revelation is given to man to supply the imperfections of the law of nature; and to restrict ourselves to the latter, and renounce the former, in any case in which it is competent to guide us, is at once to contemn God's gift and to defeat the end for which it was given. To contend, then, that the Bible is to be our rule, only in matters of a purely religious nature, in matters connected with conscience and the worship of God, while in matters of a civil or political nature we have nothing to do with the Bible, is to maintain what is manifestly untenable. To require nations, who possess the sacred volume, to confine themselves, in their political affairs, to the dim light of nature, is not more absurd than it would be to require men, when the sun is in the heavens, to shut out its full blaze and go about their ordinary duties by the feeble rays of a taper. Indeed, if nations are moral subjects, they are bound to regulate their conduct by whatever laws their moral Governor has been pleased to give them; and as they are the subjects of the Mediator, they must be under the law of the Mediator as contained in the scriptures. He

has not placed his moral subjects in ignorance of his will, nor left them to search for it amid the obscurities and imperfections of a law which sin has effaced and well nigh obliterated. In the Holy Scriptures of truth, he has given them a fairer and more complete exhibition of the principles of immutable and eternal justice, than that which is to be found in the law of nature.

We have only to look into the volume of revelation itself, to have these reasonings confirmed. The people of Israel were instructed to regulate their national concerns by a revealed standard, and were taught to regard the possession of God's revealed statutes and judgments as a national distinction for which they were bound to be grateful. Nor is there any thing said, which would warrant us to conclude that this was to be regarded as peculiar to that people. 'Behold,' says Moses, 'I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it: keep therefore and do them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations. And what nation is so great that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?'* In strict conformity with this, the chief magistrate was to have a copy of the law, according to which he should act in the discharge of his official duties. 'And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes, to do them: that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.'† The same principle is illustrated in the instructions given to the rulers, judges, and kings of Israel. To Joshua it was said, 'This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have

* Deut. iv. 5, 6, 8. † Deut. xvii. 18—20.

good success.'* When the days of David drew nigh that he should die, he charged Solomon, his successor on the throne, thus: 'Be thou strong and show thyself a man; and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself.'†

We wait not to quote those passages, in which nations and their rulers are encouraged to obey the law of God by the promise of suitable rewards; are cautioned against disobedience by appropriate threats; and are spoken of as actually punished for their transgression of this rule. What has been already adduced is sufficient to show that the Jews, at least, were bound to regulate their national concerns by the revealed will of Jehovah: and the inference from this is neither obscure nor illegitimate, that nations, like them in possession of revealed truth, are still bound to take it as their supreme rule, standard, and guide, in all their civil affairs. Neither do we wait to inquire what parts of the judicial law given to the Jews, are binding upon Christian states. We build at present upon the broad and undeniable *fact* that nations as such, and civil magistrates in their official capacity, were, when the matter of revelation was less extensive than it is now, bound to make it their rule of duty; and from this we deduce the natural and most reasonable inference, that civil communities, blessed by God with the perfect revelation of his will, are under obligation, at all times, to shape and model their political conduct by the dictates of this infallible standard. The principle on which they were at any time bound to do so being a moral principle, they must be held bound to do the same at all times: what is moral is neither of local nor temporary obligation. If nations are not bound by the word of God, they are not responsible or punishable for acting contrary to it, but may, at pleasure, revel with impunity in the violation of every branch of revealed truth;—a degree of licentious indulgence which, however agreeable to the taste of the infidel, cannot fail to shock the mind of every true Christian.

But, when we look even into the New Testament, we find in it many things respecting the nature, origin, and

* Josh. i. 8. † 1 Kings ii. 1—3.

ends of civil government; the qualifications, duties, and claims of civil rulers; and the obligations of subjects towards magistrates, both supreme and subordinate. For what purpose, we ask, are these placed in the sacred volume? Surely not to be overlooked, but to be read, pondered, and obeyed. They are certainly designed to be of use; but this they cannot be, if nations as such, and men in their civil capacity, are not under their authority as parts of revealed truth. When, therefore, we find civil rulers, king and judges, commanded to *be wise* and to *be instructed*, must we not understand them as required to go to the Bible for the instruction they need, and to extract from this sacred repository their lessons of political wisdom? It thus appears satisfactorily established, that nations are under the obligation of the revealed will of Christ in general, and bound to regulate their transactions by it, in as far as it contains what is applicable to such, whether in the form of principle, precept, or example.

And if this is the case with regard to revelation as a whole, it will not be denied with regard to the moral law in particular. Nations, as such, are under the obligation of the moral law; they are bound to regulate their affairs by the principles and precepts of the decalogue. Every precept of that law we regard them as bound to obey. It is, we are aware, maintained that only the precepts of the second table are obligatory on civil communities. As an individual standing in a particular relation and circumstances is not under obligation to obey those parts of revelation which have respect to persons placed in other relations and circumstances, so it is contended that nations are only under the obligation of such parts of the moral law as can be shown to apply to them. We frankly admit the fairness of this reasoning. But then we are prepared to maintain that every part of the moral law is applicable to nations. If nations in their national capacity, and magistrates in their official character, are admitted to be moral subjects, it will not be easy to show that they are exempt from the obligation of any part of the moral law. If it could be shown that there are some requirements in that law which nations are incompetent to fulfil, it would follow, of course, that from these they are exempted. If nations, however, can be shown to be capable of obeying every precept—those of the first as well as of the second table—it will be difficult

to persuade an unprejudiced mind that they are free from the obligation of any one of them.

With regard to the second table, there is, of course, no dispute; yet the last precept of this department reaches farther than many of those who contend against all national religion can consistently go; it respects the state of the heart. But it may easily be shown, that nations are as capable of obeying the precepts of the first as those of the second table. How is it, we ask, that nations can obey even the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth commandments, but just by passing laws obliging men to perform their respective relative duties; by protecting the life and property of individuals; by discouraging licentiousness; and by promoting truth between man and man, by the sanctity of an oath? And may they not, in like manner, manifest their obedience to the first, second, third, and fourth precepts, by embodying into their constitution an acknowledgment of the being and character of the one living and true God; by providing for the ordinances of divine worship being maintained and observed in the land; by enacting laws calculated to restrain all blasphemous abuse of God's sacred name; and by making provision for the sanctification of the Sabbath? And if nations are thus capable of obeying the whole moral law, who will contend that they are not under obligation so to do? We allow that the scriptures of truth are necessary to guide them in yielding this obedience: but is not this true of the one table as much as of the other? The kingdoms of the world require, indeed, much direction from the word of God, in performing the solemn and delicate duties obligatory upon them by the first table of the moral law: but do they require no such direction with regard to those of the second? They do. The law of marriage belongs to the fifth precept; but how, without having recourse to other portions of the scriptures, can any Christian nation legislate against poligamy? The law of murder is founded on the sixth; and how, without betaking to some other part of revealed truth, can it be shown that the murderer should be punished with death? It thus appears that nations, as such, are bound to recognize the obligation of the word of God as a whole; to make it their rule in all their transactions, and their standard of appeal in all circumstances; and, in this way, to show their dutiful subjection to that

divine Mediator, who is at once the author of revelation, and the Governor among the nations.

Thirdly. It is a duty which nations owe to Messiah the Prince, to have respect to moral and religious qualifications in those whom they appoint over them as rulers. We wait not to agitate the question of the people's right to elect their own office-bearers. Whatever diversity of opinion may prevail regarding the first magistrate, there is now no dispute, at least in these lands, with regard to the right of election in the legislative and executive departments of government. The general practice of the nations unites with scripture and common sense in support of a representative system of government. The rulers are just the representatives of the people, and, of course, are understood to be elected by and responsible to the people, according to the constitution and laws of the land. Even under the Old Testament dispensation, when kings were designated to office by immediate revelation, the consent of the people was deemed indispensable to their lawful authority; and they were liable to removal from office, by the people, for abuse of their trust. With regard to subordinate office-bearers, also, such directions were given as clearly imply that the right of election belonged to the community. 'Take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; thou shalt in any wise set him over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose; one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee; thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.'*

But is it to be supposed that the people, who are invested with the right of election, are left without all control in the exercise of this right; that they are at liberty, acting from mere prejudice, self-interest, or caprice, to choose whom they will; and that the objects of their choice are forthwith, in consequence of being so chosen, invested with lawful and indisputable authority? So far from this being the case, the people are bound to use their elective power

* Deut. i. 13; xvii. 14, 15.

discreetly and wisely; they are under obligation to fix upon men possessed of qualifications fitting them for office; nor are they themselves constituted the sole judges of what these qualifications may be. God has given them in his word a supreme rule of direction, in which the character of civil rulers is fully described, and only such as seem to them to be possessed of this character are they at liberty to appoint. If the people were under no restriction of this nature, it is fearful to think of the consequences that would ensue. As the power of the magistrate is not an absolute power which he is at liberty to employ as he chooses, so neither is the right of the elector an absolute right which he is at liberty to exercise as he chooses. Both the one and the other are placed under the limiting control of the divine Law; and it is only when they are used according to this law that they are used aright.

It is not every individual who is qualified to hold office in a nation. Good natural talents, a cultivated mind, and a due share of acquaintance with the principles of government, and with the constitution and laws of the country, seem indispensable. Scripture, not less than common sense, discountenances the practice of setting persons of feeble intellect to bear rule. 'Wo unto thee, O land, when thy king is a *child!* Thou shalt provide out of all the people *able* men. Take ye *wise* men and *understanding*, and I will make them rulers over you.'* Not less essential are *moral* qualifications. High and incorruptible integrity, well regulated mercy, strict veracity, and exemplary temperance, are all specified with approbation in the word of God. 'Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people men of *truth*, hating *covetousness*. He that ruleth over men must be *just*. *Mercy* and truth preserve the king, and his throne is upholden by *mercy*. If a ruler hearken to *lies*, all his servants are wicked. It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes strong drink; lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted.'†—Nay, more than this, *religious* qualifications are required in the scriptures. A profession of religion would seem to be implied in the canon: 'One *from among thy brethren* shalt thou set

* Eccl. x. 16; Exod. xviii. 21; Deut. i. 13.
† Exod. xviii. 21; 2 Sam. xxiii. 3; Prov. xx. 28. xxxi. 4, 5.

king over thee; thou mayest not set a *stranger* over thee, who is not thy brother.'* But the vital principle of true religion in the soul is also expressly specified. 'Thou shalt provide out of all the people such as *fear God*. He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the *fear of God*.'† It is needless to say, that the fear of God is spoken of in scripture as the very essence and sum of true piety. 'The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me.'

Thus it appears that three distinct classes of qualifications are necessary in civil rulers:—natural, moral, and religious. They are required to be men of excellent abilities, of unimpeachable character, and of sound piety.—Weak and ignorant men; drunkards, libertines, sabbath-breakers, profane swearers; papists, socinians, infidels, are, accordingly, disqualified for exercising government in a country which is blessed with the volume of revelation. Such, therefore, the people are not at liberty to appoint to places of power and trust. As regards the two former classes of qualifications, namely such as are natural and moral, this statement will not perhaps be disputed by many who will demur to it as regards the third, that is, religious qualifications. The word of God, however, is as explicit on this point as on the others; and if it is asked, 'Of what use is religion to a civil ruler?' it might be deemed enough, in reply, to refer the objector to the Bible, where such qualifications are expressly required. But surely no one who candidly reflects that civil magistrates are denominated 'ministers of God;' that they are required to administer oaths; that they exert a mighty influence by their example; and that decided personal piety adds greatly to the lustre and power, even of natural and moral qualities; can be at a loss to perceive the importance of religion to one who is invested with civil power.

It will surely, then, be allowed that the nations owe it, as a duty to Messiah their Prince, to appoint over them rulers possessed of such qualifications as his word prescribes. What these qualifiications are we have already seen. And it requires but a slight glance at the state of things, even

* Deut. xvii. 15. † Exod. xviii. 21. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3.

among those nations which are in possession of the inspired volume, to perceive, how utterly and how extensively this duty is disregarded. It is a too common maxim with many in our day, that magistrates as such have nothing to do with religion,—nothing to do with it, it would seem, not only as an object of legislation, but even as a qualification for office. How often does it happen that men of *any* religion, or of *no* religion at all, are unblushingly preferred to those who have justly acquired a reputation for godliness? How dishonouring to Christ thus to set up, as his ministers, his open and avowed enemies—men who deny his divinity, who blaspheme his name, who deride his worship, and who openly profane his sacred day! Such conduct is attempted to be justified on a principle which is alike pernicious and fallacious, namely, that we have nothing to do with the private character of public men. Apart from the divinely authorized maxim, that 'the wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted,'—a maxim which all history illustrates,—if rulers are required, as we have shown, to respect the glory of Christ, and to take his law as their rule, it is impossible that their moral and religious qualifications can be a matter of indifference, for without such qualifications, they cannot perform any one of these duties. However the force of circumstances, and the overruling providence may compel men of no private worth to devise and execute measures of public utility there can be no security, for either the existence or efficient execution of such measures, when the public offices are filled with worthless men. And, even if there were, this would not prove it to be the duty of Christians to confer the highest honours of state on persons of this description, and that, too, in preference to men of distinguished private worth. How differently did the patriotic Nehemiah feel and act in this matter. 'I gave,' says he, 'Hananiah, ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem; *for he was a faithful man and feared God above many.*'* The senseless outcry of *measures not men*, may serve the purpose of the slavish adherents of a profligate ministry, but it is a maxim that is essentially base, unmanly, irrational, and unchristian. It overlooks entirely the necessary connexion subsisting betwixt cause and effect;

* Neh. vii. 2

it pours contempt on those parts of revelation in which the qualifications of rulers are prescribed; and it manifests an utter disregard of the honour and glory of the Saviour. The maxim *measures not men*, is not more deserving of respect than its converse, *men not measures*. Indeed if we were under an absolute necessity of choosing either the one or the other, we should not hesitate to prefer the latter, there being in our opinion, a much greater likelihood of good men correcting the evils of bad measures, than of good measures restraining the evils of bad men. But there is no need for adopting either. With the Bible in our hands, we are entitled to insist on both. *Measures* AND *men*, or rather *men* AND *measures*, is the maxim on which Christian notions should proceed. And every people, duly alive to their obligations to Messiah, by making it an unalterable and fundamental law that they shall set over them only 'able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well,' will take care so to frame their constitution and regulate their practice, that the openly vicious and ungodly shall not have it in their power to thrust themselves into the sanctuaries of law and justice.

Nor is it only to the qualifications of the rulers whom they choose, that, out of respect to the will and glory of Christ, men are bound to attend, but also to their own qualifications as electors. This point is too apt to be forgotten. It is, however, one of very great importance. Where the elective franchise is liberally enjoyed, every thing may be said to depend upon the manner in which it is exercised. Electors, who are themselves irreligious and immoral, are not likely to set a high value on the existence of proper qualifications in those whom they choose to represent them. To such, the absence of these qualities is apt rather to prove a recommendation. But the choice of a representative, it should be borne in mind, is a civil right, the exercise of which involves, to a great extent, the welfare of the nation. From an improper use of this privilege, it is not the individual himself alone who suffers, but the community at large. It is, consequently, of immense moment, that he exercise it, not from passion, fancy, or prejudice, but under the guidance of sound Christian principle. He is bound to subject his judgment and inclinations in this matter to the control of God's word. Hence the vast impor-

tance of having the public mind deeply imbued with pure moral sentiments, and correct religious principles. Never should the professing Christian suffer himself to forget that he is bound to act in character at all times. Never can the circumstance occur which will warrant him to say, Now I may drop the Christian and act the civilian or the man. It is not in matters of an ecclesiastical nature merely that he is to act as a Christian. He must conduct himself as a Christian at all times; when acting as a member of the state, not less than as a member of the church; in the workshop, as well as in the sanctuary; at the hustings, as well as at the table of the Lord.

Fourthly. The nations ought to have respect to Christ, in their subjection to those who rule over them by his authority. Scripturally-qualified and lawfuly constituted magistrates are entitled to conscientious submission. Whatever are the specific duties to which such are entitled, whether respect, or tribute, or prayer, the duties are to be performed, not from slavish dread or selfish motives, but from respect to the authority and honour of the Redeemer. The law of Christ, on this point, is very fully and explicitly laid down in an oft-quoted but ill-understood part of New Testament scripture. 'Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, *not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.* For, *for this cause*, pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render, therefore, to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.'* We say

* Rom. xiii. 1—7.

nothing at present of the character of the powers to which subjection is here enjoined. The nature of the subjection is that to which we would first call attention. It is conscientious subjection that is spoken of; free, willing, hearty; not forced or constrained. It is such as supposes the lawfulness of the authorities to which it is paid, and such as recognizes the will of Him by whom they act. It is to proceed from respect to the authority enjoining obedience, and not from a mere dread of the consequences of disobedience. In this way are the inhabitants of the nations bound to yield to their rulers:—'*fear*,' not a slavish involuntary dread, but an affectionate, respectful, and confident veneration;—'*well-doing*,' in the diligent performance of the duties of their station, and constant fulfilment of the laws;—'*tribute*,' the pecuniary support which is requisite for internal improvements, national defences, and the maintenance of such functionaries as devote their whole time to the public good, and which is to be paid cheerfully, not merely as a return for privileges enjoyed, but as a mark of submission to, and approbation of, God's ordinance;—'*custom*,' that particular form of taxation which falls not directly on persons or landed property, but on goods imported or exported;—and '*honour*,' in the use of respectful language and demeanour, avoiding, on the one hand, all scurrilous vilification, and, on the other, all idolatrous adulation, of men in power. These duties are to be performed from a principle of conscience; and the refusal to perform them is denounced and threatened with danger. 'Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation.' The resistance of lawful authority is thus stigmatized as rebellion against God, and, according to the views formerly laid down, must be regarded as peculiarly offensive to the Messiah.

It is proper, however, to remark, that it cannot be to every power, without exception, that subjection, under these awful sanctions, is inculcated. Such a supposition is any thing but honouring to Christ. Some, indeed, have maintained this, and, the better to support their views, have regarded the apostle, in the above passage, as having immediate respect to the then existing government. This opinion they found on the words, 'The powers that *be*.' 'There *is* no power.' But they overlook the circumstance that similar phraseology is employed, in laying down general

principles applicable to every age. For example:—'There *is* no man that hath left house, &c., but he shall receive an hundred-fold.' Here the phrase is the same as when it is said, in the passage in question, 'There *is* no power but of God; and if the latter is restricted to the then existing authorities, ought not the former to be explained as applying exclusively to the men of the then existing generation? Again, we read:—'There *be* just men to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked;' where the mode of expression is the same as in the phrase, 'The powers that *be*;' yet who ever thought of regarding the sentiment expressed in this passage as peculiar to the time when Solomon wrote? Indeed the laws of impartial criticism require us to explain the character of the powers spoken of by the context, where they are described as 'not a terror to good works, but to evil—ministers of God for good—bearing not the sword in vain—revengers to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.' It is only necessary to compare, or rather contrast, these expressions with the character of the then existing powers, to be convinced that the whole passage is descriptive of the duties of Christians, towards, not any magistrates who may happen to be possessed of power, but such as are what they ought to be. Nero, who at that time wore the purple, was in every respect the opposite of what is here described. He was one of the most wicked monsters that ever occupied a throne;—a terror, not to evil works, but to good;—bearing the sword in opposition to every thing that deserved protection and support;—and executing wrath only on such as did good and shunned evil. *Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.* Let Nero be tried by this test.

The primitive Christians, who lived during his reign, it will be allowed, did that which was good. They professed and maintained the religion of the cross; they worshipped and served the Saviour of the world; they waited on the ordinances of religion with examplary diligence; they faithfully discharged the relative duties of life, and conducted themselves in an orderly and inoffensive manner as members of civil society. And what was the 'praise' they received in return? Why, they were charged with every crime: were treated with every indignity; were tortured by every infernal device; were crucified, and their bodies either thrown to the dogs, or converted into torches

with which to illuminate the capital! So far from the apostle's language referring to the existing governors, then, is it not more natural to regard it as framed on purpose to reprove them, by presenting a striking contrast? Indeed, it would be difficult to conceive a more cutting sarcasm on Nero and his associates in power, than is here furnished. None but the most blinded devotee to the exploded doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, would ever think of interpreting this passage of the then existing government. Nor is it easy to conceive a greater insult that could be offered to the Holy One of Israel, by whom kings reign, than to represent such a monster as Nero as 'the minister of God for good,' and his government as 'the ordinance of God' which could not be resisted on pain of damnation.

Without confounding all moral distinctions, it is impossible to suppose that the lawfulness of a power depends solely on the fact of its existence. The distinction betwixt a preceptive and a providential power, is not more consonant with reason and common sense, than with scripture. And if it is a breach of the obligation due to the Messiah, to set up as his representatives and vicegerents persons devoid of every requisite qualification for office, equally at variance with the duty we owe to him must it be to honour and acknowledge such persons when set up. Those to whom conscientious submission is due in the name of Christ, should certainly possess some measure of the qualifications which Christ himself has prescribed. It is absurd to suppose that nations, who are the moral subjects of the Redeemer, are bound, in obedience to his authority, to recognize and approve of, as his ministers, those who overlook and despise his authority, who employ their influence in opposition to his interests, and conduct their government on principles that are immoral. It is, doubtless, the duty of Christians living under a government of this description, to submit to it; but they are to submit to it as a chastisement sent them by God, and to conform, for the sake of peace, to the general order of society; while they take care, at the same time, to bear a full and honest testimony against its evils, and to avoid whatever is calculated to involve them in a participation of its guilt.

Under immoral systems of government it is, happily, possible for Christians to do many things, in compliance

with the principles of social order, and for the good of the commonwealth, as well as of individuals, without giving the sanction of their approbation to such systems as the ordinance of God. These things may be done, from regard to their own intrinsic obligation, as things moral in themselves and required by God. There is an obvious distinction betwixt doing *what* is enjoined, and doing the same thing *because* it is enjoined. Lawful authority is for the most part, though not always, to be obeyed; unlawful authority, never. Lawful authority may be employed to enjoin what is not lawful; and in this case it is not to be obeyed. Unlawful authority may be employed to enjoin what is lawful; and, in this case also, it is not to be obeyed. What, it may be said, not to be obeyed even when requiring what is right! Certainly not. The thing enjoined, indeed, is to be done; not, however, *because* enjoined, but from respect to its own intrinsic obligation springing from the law and will of God. A wicked neighbour, usurping an authority which does not belong to him, intrudes into my dwelling and *commands* me to worship God, to love my wife, and to bring up my children in the fear of the Lord. These are lawful commands; and it is at my peril that I neglect them; but in doing them I am not, surely, obeying the intruder. This distinction, betwixt obedience to lawful commands out of respect to the authority enjoining them, and obedience to them out of respect to their own intrinsic obligation, is a most important one, in a practical point of view. It enables Christians, living under iniquitous and anti-christian powers, to do much that is calculated to promote the good of the community, and their own civil interests, without giving the sanction of their approbation to those who renounce the authority and disregard the law of Christ, and thus violating their oath of allegiance to the Prince of the kings of the earth.

Fifthly. Nations, as the moral subjects of Messiah the Prince, are under obligation to recognize his rightful authority over them, by swearing allegiance to him. It is the duty of a subject to swear allegiance to his lawful sovereign; at least he must stand prepared to do so when required. So it is with nations. Not only are the inhabitants of a nation, as occasion calls for it, to enter into sacred confederation with one another, in order to secure and defend their valued rights and privileges, but the nation, as such, through

the medium of its authorized functionaries and by its usual forms of legal enactment, ought publicly to avow its attachment to the Lord Jesus Christ as its King and Prince, to recognize his legal authority, and to bind itself to his service by an oath. It is not supposed, that the formal act of swearing allegiance is to be gone into lightly, or on all occasions. But, certainly, in times of deep distress, as a means of animation and comfort; in times of backsliding and danger, for the purpose of promoting stability; as calculated to promote and maintain steps of reformation; and also as a fit mode of expressing gratitude for blessings, a nation may warrantably and dutifully engage in such an exercise. The example of the nation of Israel, of old, might be easily adduced in circumstances such as these.* From time to time, that people publicly and solemnly recognized their allegiance to the Lord their Redeemer.

The transaction at Sinai partook distinctly of a federal character. The children of Israel were then put in possession of a complete body of laws, for the regulation of their national concerns. Stipulations and restipulations were mutually passed. On the one hand, the Messiah, amid a display of awful majesty, offered them a civil constitution and moral organization. On the other, by the repeated declaration 'all that the Lord hath said, we will do,' the people formally accepted the gracious offer, promised obedience to it, and solemnly avowed their allegiance to him by whom it was given. Possessing the nature, this transaction received the name, of a *covenant*. From the gracious covenant relation in which the people of Israel stood to God, it is plain that, in this whole transaction, they had to do with the Son of God as Mediator. In no other character, could any of the guilty race of man receive blessings from him, or promise him obedience. Nor was there any thing in the circumstances of that people which rendered the duty in question peculiar to them. What was adapted to promote national prosperity in their case, is calculated to do the same in all cases. It is more reasonable to regard their political organization as a *model* to future nations, than as an *exception* from all others. The faculties, powers, pas-

* The reader may consult at his leisure the following passages:—Neh. ix. 1—13; Deut. xxix. 10—15; Josh. xxiv. 25; 2 Kings xi. 17, 20; Ps. lxxvi. 11; 2 Kings xxiii. 1—3; Is. xliv. 3—5.

sions, rights, and interests, of men are the same at all times; nor is there any thing either local or restricted in those commands by which ancient Israel were enjoined to enter into covenant with God. Indeed, when we look into the predictions which refer to new testament times, we are at no loss to perceive, that the duty of national vowing to the Lord is not limited to the Jews. 'In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts. The Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and shall perform it.'* Here it is distinctly made known that, in the days of the gospel, Gentile countries should copy the example of ancient Canaan, in the matter of vowing allegiance to the Lord. To the same effect we read:—'Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.'† A *land* is just a people in their civil capacity: and its being 'married to the Lord' surely denotes its being bound to him by covenant engagement, as the wife is to her husband.

The principle has been exemplified in more modern times, in France, Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, as well as in our own country. The National Covenant of Scotland, and the Solemn League entered into by Scotland, England, and Ireland, are memorable instances of national oaths of allegiance to the Messiah. These were sworn and approved by the king and his household, and by persons of all ranks in the land. This is not the place to defend the nature of these noble instruments, to show their obligation on posterity, or to speak at large of the guilt these nations have incurred by their perfidious neglect of them. These are topics, indeed, of no mean importance in themselves, besides being worthy of very serious consideration at the present time, in connexion with existing agitations and discussions. But we have to do with them now only as accredited and interesting exemplifications of the national duty of swearing allegiance to the Redeemer. It has been much the practice of a flippant generation to laugh at 'the Covenant' and 'the Solemn League,' as the products and

* Is. xix. 18, 20. † Is. lxii. 4.

signs of an illiberal and unenlightened age; but it may fairly be questioned, on the authority of the best historians, whether our country ever appeared in a more dignified attitude, than during the period in question, or whether a kingdom can ever be more dutifully or appropriately employed than in solemnly and sincerely vowing to Him who is prince of the kings of the earth, by whom kings reign and princes decree justice.

There is still another duty of nations to the Redeemer, to which, from its importance, we shall devote a separate chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

MEDIATORIAL DOMINION OVER THE NATIONS, CONTINUED.

SIXTHLY. It is the duty of nations, as such, to have respect to the religion of Christ.

This is a point, which, from its intimate connexion with the mediatorial dominion, its vast importance in itself, and its being a subject on which the public sentiment at the present time is greatly divided, demands particular consideration.

That civil government has any thing to do with religion is by many pointedly denied. Every sort of alliance betwixt church and state, is expressly condemned as unlawful and unscriptural. Not content with exposing the abuses of existing civil establishments of religion, and seeking their reformation, their entire overthrow is demanded, and the very principle on which they are founded held up to unmeasured reprobation. We are not blind to the evils that prevail in the national churches of our land, and should be sorry that any thing we might say should have the effect of perpetuating or palliating these in the least. They are indeed too palpable to be overlooked, and too great to admit of being justified. We are not even prepared to approve of the *nature* of the connexion subsisting betwixt church and state in our existing establishments; and, of course, we frankly admit that it is not a reformation of abuses merely, but an entire constitutional change that is needed. Nevertheless, believing as we do, that it is the duty of nations to concern themselves about religion, that consequent-

ly a union betwixt church and state of an unexceptionable kind is capable of being formed, and, moreover, that the formation of such a union is not only lawful in itself, but dutiful and obligatory, we are anxious that the principle should be distinguished from the corruptions that have been grafted upon it. In lopping off and giving over to merited destruction the excrescences, it is not necessary that the root should be destroyed. In the preservation of the principle, we think we see involved the glory of the Messiah, the good of his church, and the best interests of civil society itself. For this reason, and not by any means to uphold or apologize for existing corruptions, in whose maintenance we have no interest, and for whose continuance we have no wish, we are induced to submit the following statements respecting the duty of Christian nations towards the true religion of Jesus.

It is of the greatest consequence, in every controversy, that parties have a distinct idea of the point in dispute. The things in which they agree and those in which they differ, ought to be well understood. In the present instance, it may not be easy to give unexceptionable definitions. We beg attention, however, to the following distinctions; which are deemed necessary to the proper understanding of the present question.

It is not whether it be the duty of a Christian nation to establish a *false* religion; but whether it be not its duty to establish the *true* religion.

It is not whether it be the duty of the church of Christ to seek alliance with a *heathen, anti-christian*, and *immoral state*;—but whether it may not enter into alliance with a government, possessing the character, and subserving the purposes of *the moral ordinance of God.*

It is not whether it be the duty of the state merely to afford *legal protection* or *positive toleration*, to the true religion;—but, whether it be not its duty to extend *positive favour, encouragement*, and *support*, to the church of Christ.

It is not whether the *church of Christ may not exist*, and even prosper, without the favour, encouragement, and support, of the state;—but whether it may not be the *duty of the state* to extend such countenance to the true religion.

It is not, whether the state has power *in and over* the church, so as to interfere in any way with her internal jurisdiction and management;—but whether it be not com-

petent to, and the duty of, a Christian state to frame regulations *about* the church, or respecting the external interests of religion. Whether, in short, a Christian state be not possessed of power *circa sacra*, although having no authority whatever *in sacris*.

These statements will help to limit and explain the point on which the present discussion turns. And, without adopting any of the definitions of a civil establishment of religion that have been given, either by their friends or by their enemies, or venturing on any definition of our own, the proposition we design to explain, confirm, and defend, is this:—THAT IT IS THE DUTY OF A NATION, AS SUCH, ENJOYING THE LIGHT OF REVELATION, IN VIRTUE OF ITS MORAL SUBJECTION TO THE MESSIAH, LEGALLY TO RECOGNIZE, FAVOUR, AND SUPPORT THE TRUE RELIGION."*

First. This proposition would seem, indeed, to be but a natural and necessary inference from the fact already established, of national subjection to the Messiah. Nations and their rulers are, as we have seen, the subjects of Christ. They are under, not only his providential control, but his moral authority. Now, the religion of Christ, that is to say, his church or spiritual kingdom, must be to him an object of the deepest interest; it is that, indeed, to which every thing else is subordinate. To it, of course, the nations of the world must be regarded as subordinate; and if so, is it not utterly inconceivable that they should be freed from all obligation to have respect to the interests of religion? Indeed, it sounds paradoxical or self-contradictory, to say, that nations, which hold so prominent a place among the moral subjects of the Messiah, should be not only exempted, but absolutely prohibited, from taking any concern about that which is dearest to the heart of their Sovereign. The dominion of the Head of the church over civil society, renders it, not only expedient and safe, but dutiful and obligatory, for nations, as such, to interest themselves about the true religion. The doctrine of the mediatorial headship over the nations, lays a firm and ample foundation for an alliance betwixt church and state, which has been rashly

* We beg it to be remarked, that when we make use of the term *state*, we mean a civil government possessing the character of the moral ordinance of God; and that when we speak of the *church*, we mean the church possessing and maintaining the true religion of Christ.

pronounced to be in every case unlawful, unchristian, and sinful. While this doctrine is admitted, it will be difficult to refuse the legitimacy of the inference in favour of the alliance in question. If men would only look without prejudice, at the plain testimony of revelation, there might be less disputing on this point. Does not the apostle Paul speak of God having put all things under the feet of Christ, and 'given him to be Head over all things to the church?' Mark the language. It is not only 'Head over *all* things;' but 'Head over all things *to the church*.' It is for the sake of the church that he is invested with universal mediatorial dominion: in other words, the *end* of Christ's universal mediatorial dominion is *the good of the church*. Thus far, all is clear and undeniable. But *the nations* are among the 'all things,' over which Christ is appointed 'Head.' It follows then, that Christ is appointed *Head over the nations for the good of the church*. There must therefore, surely be some way in which the nations are capable of subserving the interests of the church. Is it possible, then, to conceive that it is not the duty of the nations to promote, by every means in their power, the good of the church? Is it conceivable that nations are not under obligations to advance the very end for which they are placed in subjection to Messiah? Believe this who can. To us it appears that, although there were not another passage on the subject in the whole Bible, that which we have now in view should be sufficient to prevent us from giving our assent to the proposition that the nations have nothing to do with religion.*

* We are not unaware that an inference of an opposite nature has been drawn from the mediatorial dominion over the nations. The argument is this:—Christ, as Mediator, is governor of the nations—he does not govern the nations immediately, but has delegated this to the people—the people, however, are almost universally wicked—it is therefore absurd to suppose that the Redeemer should commit the care of his church to the wicked. But, in this mode of reasoning, there are several fallacious and mistaken assumptions. It is, first of all, assumed that the theory of an establishment supposes that Christ commits his church to the care of the civil government, whereas, all that it implies, is, that it is the duty of the civil government to extend countenance and protection to the church of Christ. There is, farther the unreasonable and pernicious assumption, that organized civil society, and the world lying in wickedness, are one and the same, whereas, the one is the kingdom of Satan, who is the God of this world, and the other a moral ordinance of God. Moreover, while it is admitted that Christ has committed the power of government, in some sense, to the people, it is

Secondly. The manner in which the object of the magistrate's office is described in the New Testament, confirms and illustrates the preceding observation. He is the minister of God for GOOD, and a terror, not to good works, but to the EVIL. The terms *good* and *evil* are expressed without limitation or restriction; and without some other information than the passage itself furnishes, we are surely not warranted to conclude either that offences against religion form no part of the *evil* which it is the duty of the ruler to discourage, or that the interests of true religion form no part of the *good* which it becomes him to promote. 'Had it been said,' writes Mr. Willis, '*power* is an ordinance merely to enforce common justice between man and man, or to protect one from another's violence; and had the ideas of *justice* and *protection* been carefully limited according to the modern theory, which, by the way, circumscribes them almost as arbitrarily as the scripture terms, *good* and *evil* themselves;—had it thus defined the magistrate's province, then our controversy with those who are ever alleging that secular things only fall within his care, were at an end. But let it be observed, no such limitation is introduced. It is not said, indeed, on the other hand, what offences the magistrate is to resent under the head of *evil*, nor how far, and by what means, he is to promote *good*. But we ask, Does not the burden of proving that offences against religion are excluded from the one, or that the positive advancement of that cause is not included in the other, lie upon our opponents? The analogy of the Old Testament entitles us to call for this. But our right to call for it rests on the broader ground of the moral relation in which the ruler, as well as the nation, stands to God;—a moral relation for which the moral law must be the rule. We claim, on this ground, a positive right to interpret the expressions above quoted in a larger sense. We must remind him, who would restrict the province of the civil authorities, to the second table of the law, that crimes against the first table are not only, at least, equally offensive to the God of nations, but equally injurious to the safety of the state. Outrages on the Majesty of heaven, open contempt

forgotten that he has in his word, both commanded the people to qualify themselves for the right use of his power, and furnished them with an infallible rule to guide them in the exercise of it.

of the mysteries and the rights of religion, are more to be dreaded by society than even fraud or oppression, and will more certainly work a nation's ruin. And, on the other hand, the good connected with the encouragement of sound morals, and the diffusion of Christian truth, is more valuable than any resulting from the wisest human policy, acting merely on the selfish principle of man. We do not, then, forget that the more immediate end of civil government is the outward order of the community. But, if every ordinance of God is bound, as it surely is, to seek its end in connexion with his glory who ordained it, they who rule may not warrantably regard with indifference the best, because the divinely-appointed means of moralizing and civilizing the human race. And, besides, that in this view Christianity comes into the contemplation of a right and wise policy—surely he who is God's minister for good, must be bound, as far as secular power may go, to second its higher object.'*

Thirdly. The scriptures of the old testament undoubtedly contain divinely-approved examples of such a connexion betwixt church and state as that for which we contend. Under the Patriarchal economy, which, by the way, bore a closer resemblance, in many respects, to the Christian dispensation than did the Jewish, we meet with a striking combination of things civil and ecclesiastical in Melchisedec. This remarkable person was both a king and a priest.† He was 'king of Salem'—that is, a prince, a monarch, possessed of regal authority, and exercising civil dominion over a particular district more or less extensive and populous. He was also 'priest of the most high God,'—that is, invested with the sacred function of the sacerdotal office, and appointed to treat with God on behalf of men by means of sacrifice. These offices were real, not figurative merely. His bringing forth bread and wine to Abraham when returning from the slaughter of the kings, was a regal act; his blessing Abraham, and receiving from him tithes, distinctly recognize his sacerdotal character. Now, the fact of these offices being combined in the same person —whatever design there may have been to point forward by it to Him who sits 'a priest upon his throne'—shows

* National Establishments, &c. page 32.
† Gen. xiv. 18; Heb. vii. 1

that there is no such incompatibility between things civil and sacred as to render all union of them necessarily sinful and improper. It is utterly inconceivable that Melchisedec was required, either, on the one hand, to abstain from any exercise of his regal functions which might subserve the ends of his priesthood, or, on the other, in the discharge of his sacerdotal functions, to avoid having any regard to the civil interests of the people over whom he ruled. Such a separation of objects and interests may fairly be pronounced to have been, in circumstances, impracticable, and, to say the least, most unnatural. This is sufficient to convince us, that it was not required; and we may safely conclude, that Melchisedec, in acting in the double capacity of king of Salem and priest of the Most High God, felt no jarring of claims, no jealousy of interest, but the most perfect harmony and co-operation between the functions of his respective offices. Here then, we have one example, at least, of the combination of things civil and sacred possessing the authority and approbation of God, as it is spoken of in the scriptures, not only without censure, but with obvious commendation.

We have ano ther example, in the case of the Jewish kings, under the Mosaic economy. Into the *nature* or details of the civil establishment of religion, under the law, it is not necessary that we should here enter. We have at present to do with the *fact*, that legal countenance and support were given, under that dispensation, to the church. That Moses, and Joshua, and David, and Solomon, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, concerned themselves, in their capacity of civil rulers, about the interests of religion, about the erection of places of worship, the support of the ministers, the removal of obstructions, and the correction of abuses, will not be denied. This is all that we require for our present purpose. It proves, beyond all controversy, that union of church and state is not *necessarily, abstractly*, or *in itself* sinful, else it never could have received the sanction of divine approbation at any time. There may be room for discussion as to the kind of union that happens to exist, or that may be proposed to be formed; or as to the expediency of forming a union at all in certain given circumstances, but the undeniable fact of its *having once existed and that for a lengthened period with the express approval of heaven*, demonstrates that there is nothing sinful in the thing itself. This, one

should think, ought to teach a lesson of moderation to our opponents, in the denunciations in which they are accustomed to indulge. Language somewhat more measured, epithets of a less sweeping character, than those they are in the habit of employing, might be becoming in such a case. However unsparing in their censure or abuses, or decided in their opinion of inexpediency, they ought to beware of even seeming to cast a reflection on the wisdom and rectitude of the Almighty, by unceremoniously pronouncing all civil establishments of religion as, in their very nature and tendency, unscriptural, anti-christian, oppressive, unjust, and essentially sinful. *Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* And, as if to teach us, in the most impressive manner, the perfect compatibility of a friendly alliance between civil and ecclesiastical matters, —as if to make it palpable to all and forever, that there is nothing incongruous in the union of the king and the priest, the throne and the altar, the sceptre and the censer, the crown and the mitre,—at every stage of the Jewish history we meet with two distinguished characters, the one civil and the other sacred, acting together a conspicuous part, and exhibiting the most perfectly harmonious co-operation. Such were Moses and Aaron, Joshua and Eleazar, David and Abiathar, Solomon and Zadok, Hezekiah and Azariah, Zerubabel and Joshua. *These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth!*

To all this it may be said, in reply, that these are Jewish things, that they belong to a system which has 'vanished away,' and furnish no pattern for the imitation of believers under the New Testament dispensation. It is admitted that there were some things peculiar in the Jewish establishment, which succeeding nations are not bound to imitate. But it will not surely be contended for, that the whole was peculiar; there were certainly some things about it both moral and exemplary; and the question is, whether the duty of the civil ruler to interest himself about religion was not one of these things. 'It is not pleaded that all the actions of rulers among the Jews are imitable by Christian magistrates, or that the latter have exactly the same power which was allotted to and exercised by the former. . . . . But it will not follow from this, that we can draw no argument from the conduct of Jewish rulers, to establish the

warrantableness and duty of Christian magistrates employing their power in support of religion. Some are ready to conclude that the argument is entirely set aside when it is allowed that there is not an absolute sameness between the two cases. Nothing can, however, be more unfounded than this conclusion. Such a mode of reasoning is of the most dangerous tendency; and, if applied in all the extent to which it will lead, it would cut off the practical use of the greater part of the Old Testament. According to it, no argument could be drawn from the approved examples which it records, of persons of any rank, or in any station, of parents or children, husbands or wives, masters or servants, because many of their actions were peculiar, or clothed with extraordinary circumstances. . . . . The apostle argues for the support of a gospel-ministry from that which was given to the Levitical priesthood; but his argument did not imply that they should be supported exactly in the same way, 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. The priestly and prophetical offices were extraordinary and typical, in a sense in which the regal among the Jews was not; yet we do not scruple to illustrate the office, and enforce the duties of ministers of the gospel, from those of the priests and prophets, especially in their actions with reference to the public state of religion, and in advancing reformation. The judgments inflicted upon the Israelites in the wilderness were in many respects peculiar, yet the apostle holds them out as monitory ensamples to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. x. The prayer of Elijah was extraordinary, yet the apostle James urges it as exemplary to Christians, James v. 16—18. And shall we suppose that the actions of Jewish magistrates form a single exception, and that they were so peculiar, that we cannot reason from them in the way of example or analogy? . . . . . Persons may affect to talk of the difficulty of ascertaining what is moral and exemplary from what was peculiar; and by dwelling on the more intricate cases, may endeavour to lead away the attention from the subject altogether. But why should it be magnified, and represented as insurmountable, any more than others of a similar kind? The peculiarity of the divine government of Israel, or, as it is commonly called, the theocracy, consisted in general in two things; in a system of laws which was immediately given to that people from heaven; and in the exercise of a peculiar Providence in supporting and sanctioning that system, by con-

ferring national mercies and inflicting national judgments, often in an immediate and extraordinary way. Now why are not the difficulties which are started as to the application of the first of these, urged also as to the application of the last? If we cannot apply what is said in the Old Testament, concerning the duty of the rulers and nation of Israel respecting religion, unto Christian nations and rulers, because the former were under a peculiar law; then we cannot apply what is said in the Old Testament respecting the judgments denounced against the nation and rulers of Israel, unto Christian nations and their rulers, because the Israelites as a people, were under a peculiar providence, which constituted a part of their theocarcy. The same distinctions will remove the difficulty in both cases.'*

To these extracts from a source of high authority, we beg to add the following judicious remarks by an acute and able writer on the same subject. 'We cannot discern any evidence of the old testament example of a church establishment being a ceremonial thing. Nor can we believe that any reader of the old testament, unbiassed by system, in reading of the pious care of a David and a Solomon, a Hezekiah, a Josiah, and others, for the building, repairing, and purifying, the house of God, could have reckoned this an exercise of kingly authority, only fitted for the period of the church's nonage. There is something in it which recommends it to the best feelings of the heart, as worthy of all times and countries. We are confirmed in this when we recollect that it was not only to be a figure of the church to come, that the Almighty set apart that peculiar people; it was also to be a witness to the nations around, for the one living and true God, in opposition to their universal idolatry. We see that while the ceremonial worship was evidently ordained for one country, and was therefore impracticable for other nations; being in fact as a sort of wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles: yet in the great features of their national policy, it was intended by God that other nations should observe and learn from Israel.† If, then, the care of the Jewish princes about the affairs of religion had not been a duty to be imitated by others, it is certain that the polity of that nation, set up

* M'Cries Statement, pp. 121—128.
† Deut, iv. 7, 8; xxviii. 10; xxix. 24; xxxii. 27.

as God's witness to mankind, was, throughout its whole duration, fitted to confirm them in a great and prevalent error. The laws of all nations took cognizance of religion. Now, we see that the manners and worship of the Jews in almost all circumstances, were so framed, as just to be contrast to the manners and worship of the heathen. Strange, if *this* was so great an error, I mean the principle of a national recognition of a Deity, that the most prominent part of the Israelitish constitution should have been fitted rather to perpetuate than to correct it! What nation, looking on, but must have deemed this one of the very points in which Israel was 'an understanding people.' How could they look at its religious character at all, without being impressed with the lesson that the acknowledgment of the true God is the first duty of states and highest honour of princes? Why they did not learn of them more to profit, it does not fall to us here to explain. But we are sure it was in the plan of Providence,—even while the typical institutions could not be adopted by them as nations, and the mystery was to be 'hid for ages,'—that the great principles of natural religion should be visible in the church and state of the peculiar people, and so far make the heathen inexcusable. Just, then, as the reasons specified in the judicial law itself show, that certain statutes above referred to were of moral and perpetual obligation, so do *these* reasons appear to us conclusive, as proving, that the precedent of a national establishment of the church is available as a moral example.'*

So much in reply to the objection by which it is attempted to neutralize the argument derived from the examples taken from the old testament, namely, that these examples are Jewish. But it may not be irrelevant to remind our readers, that the old testament contains others besides Jewish examples. We have already specified an instance, before the Mosaic economy, in the case of Melchizedec; and we now beg leave simply to remark that several instances are on record of *Gentile* princes who, with marked approbation and distinguished success, employed their influence to promote the welfare of the church. Cyrus, king of Persia, issued a decree respecting the rebuilding of the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, and we are expressly informed

* Willis on National Establishments, &c. pp. 85--88.

that it was the Lord who stirred him up to do so.* Darius afterwards published an edict to the same effect.† Another regal enactment of the same nature was passed by Artaxerxes.‡ These are examples, the force of which cannot be set aside o n the score of being *Jewish:* and yet they were highly approved. 'Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers,' said the pious and patriotic Ezra, in grateful acknowledgment of the divine goodness, 'who hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem.'

Fourthly. From the examples just adverted to, it may be inferred to be agreeable to the light of nature or sound reason, that nations should interest themselves in religion. The cases we have specified may be said to be extraordinary, but the fact that almost all nations, ancient as well as modern, barbarous as well as civilized, have incorporated with their constitutions laws respecting religion, shows that these extraordinary impulses were in accordance with the dictates of nature. We wait not, however, to argue from this fact, but avail ourselves of it only as introductory to some few observations on the intimate connexion subsisting between religion and civil society. The church and the state, so far from being diametrically opposed, as some would seem to think, are most intimately connected, capable of the most friendly co-operation, and fit to exert the most happy mutual influence upon each other.

Let us, first of all, see what religion can do for a nation. True religion, apart from the influence it is fitted to have on the inhabitants and rulers of a country individually, cannot but affect beneficially its civil institutions and interests. Whether the government be monarchial, aristocratical, democratical, or mixed, it is not difficut to see that religion must have a mighty effect in directing it toward the ends it is designed to subserve, and guarding it against the evils to which it is incident. Religion alone can effectually guard the monarch against an arbitrary abuse of his prerogative, tyrannical oppression, and rapacious aggrandizement; or can teach him to feel and to act as the father of his people, and thus at once enable him to promote their good and merit their affection and confidence. Religion alone can restrain the nobles of a land, from seeking the

* Ezra i. 1—4. † Ezra vi. 8—12. ‡ Ezra vii. 12—20.

supposed welfare of their own order, at the expense of that of the humbler classes of society. Nor can any thing but true religion ever prevent the claims of popular liberty and rights from degenerating into excessive licentiousness, and issuing in tumultuary anarchy. Religion is requisite to teach legislators to have respect, in their enactments, to the honour and decrees of the supreme Lawgiver, rather than to the unstable dictates of worldly expediency. In courts of law and justice, religion is well calculated to disengage civil enactments from that embarrassing ambiguity which goes far to defeat their end; to put a stop to the pernicious practice of pleading any cause, however bad; to place an effectual barrier to the taking of bribes, which blind the eyes even of the wise; and to inspire with a sacred regard, at all times, to moral rectitude and honesty.

Religion is favourable to true liberty. By checking selfishness, inspiring benevolence, and teaching a strict moral equality, it proves itself decidedly friendly to the rights of the people; while, by its opposition to injustice and oppression, it directly tends to suppress whatever is unfavourable to freedom. Without religion, nations may aim at freedom, but they can never attain it; and even although they should, they are unfit for it, for, to the end of time will it hold true of communities as of individuals, that 'whom the Son makes free, *they* are free indeed.'

It might even be shown that religion is fitted to operate favourably in regard to national wealth, by securing industry; by restraining indulgences injurious to health; by hindering all profuse and foolish expenditure of public money; and by preventing to a great extent, and at all events ameliorating, the evils of pauperism which spreads like a leprosy over an immoral population. However despised and overlooked by worldly economists, the statement will be found to rest on a basis of immovable truth, that *godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

It requires little penetration to see how religion is subservient to the peace of a nation. It is directly opposed to those false views of national honour, which would associate the glory of a people with the pomp and circumstance of war. Martial music, glittering arms, mustering troops, and far-spreading conquest, have about them a glare by which

we are apt to be deceived. It should never be forgotten, however, that war is at the best a necessary evil, and inseparably connected with a bloody carnage, fell bereavement, territorial devastation, and a long train of horrible, nay, indescribable miseries. Religion directly tends to promote the blessings of peace. Securing peace with God, it inculcates peace between man and man; it puts a check to those ambitious designs and wicked passions which will be found, on the one side or the other, or perhaps on both, to originate those wars which prove a scourge and a curse to mankind; while it teaches all to aim at bringing about that happy predicted state of things, when men *shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

Religion can alone secure the true morality of a nation. Its sanctions are powerfully calculated to restrain those outbreakings of injustice and violence which the laws of civil society are designed to repress, and against which mere human enactments and punishments will be found but an ineffectual safeguard. Nor can any thing but true religion present effectual barriers to that torrent of impiety and profligacy, against which no penal laws can be directed, but which powerfully tends to sap the very foundations of national prosperity, and to call down the curse of God upon a people.

In short, without religion no nation can feel itself secure. Ungodliness provokes the anger of the Lord, and, like Israel of old, the nation that neglects religion and gives itself up to iniquity, will not be able to stand before its enemies. It may truly be said of such, *their defence is departed from them*, for, by so doing, they incur the displeasure of Him who is the only sure *defence and refuge in the day of trouble.* Warriors and statesmen may affect to despise all this, while they put their trust in human wisdom and prowess, but God can soon teach them that it is religion alone that can render a country truly invincible; and that the prayers of the godly are more to be trusted than swords of steel,—the sighs of true penitence a surer safeguard than all the thunders of artillery. Religion is, in truth, 'the cheap defence of nations.'

These remarks, on the connexion between true religion and the welfare of a civil community, are supported alike by

scripture, reason, and history. RIGHTEOUSNESS EXALTETH A NATION, BUT SIN IS A REPROACH TO ANY PEOPLE. This sacred maxim is illustrated by all history. When was the nation of Israel most prosperous, but when it was most religious, under the pious reigns of David and Solomon? And when did it become an abomination, and a hissing, and a destruction, but when it most grievously departed from the Lord, and filled up the cup of its iniquity by rejecting the Messiah? It is believed that the same thing might be said of other nations of antiquity. The period of their greatest prosperity will be found to be that of the greatest prevalence of public virtue. It has been remarked, that, in proportion to the prevalence of truth, justice, benevolence, and industry, were their glory and splendour; while their decline and final overthrow were marked by luxury, voluptuousness, envy, injustice, and vain-glorious ambition. 'The nations which have been hurled down from the supremacy which they formerly possessed, perished not from the want of resources, but of the courage and the skill to use them. God had taken their hearts from them, and they fell into an evil snare. They bowed down under the load of unrepented sin, and submitted their necks to the conqueror. Babylon, Persepolis, Greece, Rome, and Constantinople, were fuller of wealth and arms on the day that they opened their gates to the conqueror than when poor and few in numbers, but resolute in spirit, they first started in the career of victory. Had God restored to them the mind of their forefathers, they would soon have rolled back the battle from their gates, difficulties and dangers which were bringing on their speedy doom would have disappeared as a dream, and with united hearts and hands they would have re-edified to more than their former height their temples and their bulwarks. But sin, with the power of an avenging God, is the ruin of every people. He turns their wisdom into folly, and their strength into weakness. *All these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed, because thou hearkenest not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his statutes and his commandments which he commanded thee. Because thou servest not the Lord thy God with joyfulness and gladness of heart for the abundance of all things, therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee, in hunger and in thirst, and in nakedness, and*

*in want of all things ; and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he hath destroyed thee.'**

Such being the close connexion betwixt religion and the best interests of civil society, passing strange were it, indeed, if nations were not at liberty, nay, were not under obligations, to interest themselves about religion. It will be difficult to show that there is any one thing which can contribute more directly or extensively to the true prosperity of a kingdom than religion, and yet we are asked to believe that this one thing a kingdom must do nothing to introduce, support, or diffuse! Every nation is surely bound to use all lawful means of advancing its prosperity; and are we to be told that the means which, above all others, tends most powerfully to this end, is one of which it is unlawful for a nation to avail itself? True, the direct and immediate end of civil government is not the maintenance of religion, but the promotion of order, peace, and justice. Yet religion being a means, an eminent means, to the attainment of this end, no government, having the opportunity, can neglect to improve it, without incurring the guilt of negligence to its own true welfare.

As religion can do much for a nation, so a nation has it in its power to do something (may we not say much also?) for religion. It is admitted to be a difficult matter accurately and minutely to define the line and extent of the magistrate's power, *circa sacra*. We have before remarked, that the church of Christ is strictly independent of the state. Civil rulers, we repeat, have no right to dictate to her her creed; to institute her ordinances; to appoint her office-bearers; to control her government or discipline; in short to interfere in any one way with either her constitution or her administration. All this we firmly maintain. Yet are there many things which, it appears to us, a Christian nation, through the medium of its rulers, has it in its power to do for the true religion.

The civil magistrate can extend protection to the church, in the profession of her creed, in the exercise of her worship, in the administration of her ordinances, in the enjoyment of her privileges, and the possession of her undoubted rights and liberties. These are all capable of being outwardly assailed; but having in herself no power of defence

* Douglas's Prospects of Britain, pp. 16, 17.

from external attack, she is entitled to look for this to the collateral ordinance of civil government, which possesses the power required, and is under obligation to exert it for this end. Thus much is unquestionably supposed, in those who are described as 'the shields of the earth,' being spoken of also as 'nursing fathers to the church,'—a character which they could ill sustain without throwing the strong arm of protection over their tender charge; as well as in the circumstance of its being specified as one end why Christians should pray for those in authority, 'that they may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.' This, we believe, will be readily admitted; but we beg it to be distinctly observed, that what we contend for, is not a vague *passive toleration* of the true religion, in common with all manner of false and heretical systems, but an active, formal, *authoritative protection* of the true religion, to which others have no right, and which consequently they ought not to receive.

The nation is capable, also, through its functionaries, of giving a judicial or legal recognition to the true religion. The confession of faith, agreed upon by the church, may surely be adopted and ratified by the state, without the state being at all chargeable with the iniquity of dictating to the church what shall be her creed. The authoritative sanction of the magistrate can add nothing, indeed, to the evidence or weight, or obligation, or authority of the truths to which it is appended. Nothing of the kind. Nevertheless, such an act of legal recognition or ratification serves the end, not merely of pledging the nation's honour to the defence of these truths, but of constituting an open, public, national profession of the true religion. A nation, being a moral subject of Messiah, is as much bound to make a profession of religion as any private individual whatever. Can that be a Christian nation which makes no profession of the religion of Christ? And how can such a profession be *nationally* made but in some such way as we have supposed, namely, by the functionaries of the nation, in their official capacity, giving their authoritative sanction to the church's creed?

It is vain to plead, here, the difficulty civil rulers must feel in arriving at the knowledge of what is the truth, for this difficulty is not greater on their part than on that of the church or of private individuals, who, it is never once

supposed, should be exempted, on this score, from the obligation to profess the truth. The volume of revelation cannot be what its name supposes, if its meaning is incapable of being ascertained; and, if ascertainable at all, it is as much so by one as by another, who possesses the means, and chooses to make use of them for arriving at a knowledge of its contents. Infallible accuracy, it is true, is incapable of being attained by the magistrate; but here again he is only on a level with the ecclesiastical functionary and the private Christian, neither of whom can pretend to infallibility any more than the magistrate. Nor is perfect accuracy, in either case, at all necessary; all that is required of any being that they make a proper use of the means with which they are furnished of arriving at correct views of religion, and that they pronounce according to the best of their judgment. It will be admitted, we presume, that the civil magistrate may warrantably legislate on subjects connected with the advancement of the arts and the sciences. Does this suppose him to be accurately acquainted with all these? Or would it be sustained, as a sufficient excuse for his not interfering in such matters, that he is not an artizan or a philosopher? We apprehend not; and why, we ask, should he be precluded from legislating in behalf of religion, on the ground of incompetency to judge in such matters? Has not the magistrate more easy access to the source of information on the subject of religion than on the arts and sciences? besides the subject being one in which he must be understood to be far more deeply interested in than the others.

It is quite a mistake to say, that the magistrate's giving his countenance to one set of religious opinions in preference to others, involves the essence of persecution. This arises from supposing that, when the government of a country expresses its approbation of a certain doctrinal creed and form of worship, it must forthwith enjoin on all its subjects conformity in their opinions and practice, and authoritatively require the subject to believe as his rulers believe. But does this follow? No, by no means. The legislature does not, in any sense, dictate to the subject what his religion shall be. It only determines what system of religious belief shall be taught with the aid and countenance of the state. No means but what are moral are employed to bring the public mind into conformity with that of the rulers.

Every man is left, as far as civil authority or legal coercion is concerned, to choose or reject as he may see fit. The conscience of every individual is left free and unfettered, and no one has the slightest ground on which to set up the cry of persecution.

The magistrate can farther interpose the sanction of the law with regard to the *time* set apart by God to the stated services of religion. We refer here to the institution of the Sabbath. To be sure, on grounds altogether distinct from the sanctions of civil authority, all who have the volume of revelation are bound to 'remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy;' and there can be no proper sanctification of the Lord's day, in which there is not respect had to the paramount authority of God. But, without the interference of the magistrate, it is impossible that Christians, however well disposed, could, generally at least, have it in their power to obey, in this matter, the law of heaven. And it is surely a duty which nations, as such, owe to Messiah, to take order that there shall be a national observance of the day set apart for celebrating the resurrection from the dead of their Prince, even of Him who 'died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.' To the peaceful, orderly, and profitable, enjoyment of the Sabbath, even by those who are disposed to observe it, it is important that the outward observance be general; and there is no way by which this can be secured, but by the intervention of civil authority enjoining a universal cessation, throughout the land, of the business and amusements of other days. But for such interference, it must be obvious, such is the ungodliness of many and such the spirit of competition among worldly men, every species of occupation and diversion would go forward on the Lord's day with the same eagerness and publicity as on the other days of the week. There might be some who would suspend their ordinary pursuits, and, retiring into the sanctuary of their dwellings, there pursue their pious meditations and studies; but the bustle that reigned without would effectually prevent their retirement from partaking of the nature of a holy quiet, while their less scrupulous neighbours would, meanwhile, get the advantage of them in the gains of their worldly calling. There might be, and there would be, numbers, who, in spite of the sacrifices they were required to make, and the scoffs with which they

were sure to be assailed, would still go up to the house of God, and seek the advantages and the delights of the solemn assembly. But, as they went and as they came, not to speak of the disturbance to which even the acts of public worship should be exposed, how must their pious feelings be hurt, and every serious and edifying reflection be dissipated, by the sounds and the sights of busy secularity, which should every where meet their senses! It is vain to tell us that the magistrate cannot enforce the spiritual observance of the sabbath, and that the sabbath is not at all observed as it ought, if kept only outwardly. This is the most drivelling evasion of our argument. We know that the magistrate cannot enforce the spiritual observance of the Sabbath, and we do not ask him to do so. We know that secular authority can reach only to what is external. We know that it is the prerogative of God to touch, as it is his only to judge, the heart. But does not this hold true in other matters besides the observance of the sabbath,—matters, too, in which magistratical interference is admitted to be lawful? Might it not as well be pleaded that the magistrate should not make laws for the protection of human life, because he cannot restrain man from cherishing deadly hatred toward his brother man; or laws for the protection of property, because he cannot secure moral honesty; or laws against perjury, because he cannot impart to men a sacred regard to truth;—as that he may not legislate on the subject of the sabbath, because he cannot secure its spiritual observance? Although he cannot do this, we contend that it is still competent for him to interpose the solemn voice of law, and the strong arm of power, in order to secure to the nation a season of rest form public business and public amusements; and that, too, on distinctly religious grounds: and we ask him to do what he can do.

Some who deny to the magistrate all power whatever in matters of religion, nevertheless, admit the propriety of magistratical interference in regard to the sabbath. But, for consistency's sake, they are compelled to maintain that the civil enactment of a day of weekly rest, proceeds on secular grounds entirely. It is from the common consent which is understood to be given it by the people of the nation; or, because of its being necessary for the protection of property; or, as a day of mere secular rest;—it is on some such grounds as these that the magistrate is to be under-

stood as warranted to interfere. There must be no respect to the authority of God ;—no regard to the spiritual ends of the sabbatical institution. It must be brought down entirely from the high and sacred ground of religion, and placed on the low basis of a worldly motive. None of these inferior grounds, however, will be found sufficient, we apprehend, to furnish a platform broad enough, even were it firm enough, for the structure of a national sabbath.

The ground of *common consent* will not serve the purpose, inasmuch as it is preposterous to expect that Jews and infidels would ever agree to an arrangement, which should lay them under a restraint to which they did not feel themselves compelled by their consciences to submit, and their submission to which would consequently tend to involve them in the disgrace of hypocrisy.

Neither will the *protection of property* serve the purpose. For might not the Jew, in this case, complain of being compelled to suspend his lawful employment on the *first* day of the week, in obedience to the law of the land, after having felt constrained to cease from working on the *seventh* day, in obedience to the dictates of his conscience ? Nay, if the sabbath is recognized as property, and only to be protected as such, although no man may *take* another's property, what should hinder a man, as has been accurately argued, from *giving* his property away ? 'He who chooses to give up his time to his master may not surely be hindered, nor the master hindered from accepting of it.'*

But after all, the low ground of property can only, at the best, secure a cessation from *business*, while it leaves the sanctity of the Lord's holy day open to desecration by every form of amusement, provided only that those who contribute to the entertainment of others, take care to let it be understood they are not pursuing a trade. By day, the streets and avenues of the city, and the places of public resort, may be frequented by crowds, trying their skill in athletic exercises ; conducting in due form their manly sports; witnessing feats of jugglery ; listening, amid shouts of obstreperous merriment, to some low buffoon; or, perhaps, feasting on the deadly combat of noble animals brought together for the purpose of gratifying a *refined* taste, by tearing each other to pieces. And the evening of

* Willis, p. 48.

the day of holy rest may be spent in the fascinating dissipations of the concert, the ball, the assembly, the masquerade, or any other form of fashionable extravagance, which those who are, 'lovers of plesure more than lovers of God' may demand.

Such are the consequences, that must inevitably spring from maintaining, that civil authority can be interposed on behalf of the sabbath, on no higher ground than that it is the common property of the inhabitants of a nation. But is it so, that the day of the Lord is to be regarded and spoken of as only a species of human property? 'We absolutely deny,' says Mr. Willis, with becoming indignation, 'that the fourth commandment is one concerning *property*; no, not even, properly speaking, is it in part so. Except as connected with the end of serving God, the sabbath is given to no man *as his own*. It is not merely time which no man may exact from another: it is time which no man may alienate to himself. It is neither the servant's nor the master's, except as to be devoted by both to the highest ends of their being. *Property!* why, there is another command for that, whether, in truth, it be money or time that is in question . . . . . It will not do:—go where we may to seek our warrant for a law on that principle;—let us not go to the sacred statute whose foremost words proclaim its sublimer objects, 'Thou shalt remember the sabbath-day to *keep it holy!*' Such words repel us, as, in a sort, profaning holy ground, as doing a kind of sacrilege, when we would, either in the name of an individual or society, grasp at that part of the commandment which may more immediately serve our worldly interests; and, separating it from the rest, and calling it our own, would avow that with God's part of it we have nothing to do! We know this right would not be pleaded for the individual; but if *society* can only thus approach the sacred statute, we would say, in the name of religion and consistency, let the commandment alone! This is desecrating it. It is bringing it down from its lofty altitude. It is erazing from it *His* image and superscription who challenges it as his own. . . . . *The time of the labourer is his property!* And so to this it must come in seeking to acquit a nation of the duty of recognizing the whole divine law as its rule! You have to set up instead, as supreme, the *will of man!* Man will not obey such a law long, however well he loves to wield such a power. Man armed, even the ruler armed with such a

power, will soon wield it either too little or too much. Public sentiment, forming upon such a standard, will speedily manifest the opposition of the natural will of man to the will of his Maker. The pious, the timid, will soon find enough to do to hold on in their veneration of religion and its ordinances, unseduced by the example, or undismayed by the scorn, of others. Farewell to the national sabbath—farewell, as to most, to the sabbath itself—when the law shall avow no higher reasons than these! Farewell the holy quiet of that morn which was wont to be disturbed only by the ringing of the church bell, or the tread of the passenger repairing to the house of prayer. First blessing of our country! first friend of the poor! first among our cherished recollections, when in a land of strangers! Instead of the peasant and labourer conducting their well-ordered households to the sanctuary of God, we shall see the parties of pleasure mustering for their sports;—Jew pursuing his traffic with his brother Jew;—and the company of worshippers crossed in their paths by the crowds repairing to the factory; where the offered alternative of working on that day, or another being found to do the work, shall have proved too powerful for the juvenile labourer, and carried it over all the sacredness and authority of a parent's example and precept; or shall have tempted even the willing child against his mind, and for the very parent's sake, not to forfeit the means of dependence, perhaps for both! Nor is it the pious and the timid alone who would have reason, in the issue, to mourn the adoption of such a political theory: the irreligious themselves, brought within the mercy of human covetousness, would exclaim, ere long, Let us fall into the hands of God, but let us not fall into the hands of men!'*

If, again, the ground assumed, as that on which legislation is to proceed, is merely that the sabbath is a day of *secular rest*, of cessation from ordinary worldly employment, it will be found that neither will this ground serve. For, apart from the authority of God and the religious purposes for which he has instituted the sabbath, what right has any government on earth to interdict its subjects from

*See National Establishments, &c., pp. 54—60. We recommend the whole section from which the above extract is taken, as a masterly exposure of the reasonings of those who take any lower ground for a national sabbath than the moral law.

labour for any length of time whatever, provided they themselves are willing to work? Admitting it to have such a right, how is it to fix on a *seventh* part of time, as the due proportion which the season of rest is to bear to that of labour? This difficulty superseded, might not the *second*, the *third*, or any other day of the week, serve the end of secular rest as perfectly as the *first?* Nay, if civil legislation is to have no higher end in view than to secure secular rest, the magistrate can have no other sort of respect for the interests of his *moral* subjects in this matter than that which he has for *beasts of burden!* Cattle are capable of sharing in all the advantages of secular rest. We are far from thinking it beneath the dignity of a Christian nation to enact laws in favour of the inferior animals: the great Lawgiver himself has not thought it beneath his dignity to do so. But foul scorn do we hold it, to maintain that God's minister for good, when using his authority to enforce the observance of the sabbath, is to be regarded as having no higher respect to the interests of his moral subjects than to those of the brutal tribes. We enter our solemn protest against this attempt to degrade man, by confounding him with the beasts that perish.

It thus appears that, if we depart from the high vantage ground of the moral law, if we abandon the authority of God himself, if we lay aside all respect to the religious ends of the divine institution of the Sabbath, and descend to the low motives of political expediency, we shall find that the magistrate must be completely in the dark in attempting to legislate at all on such a subject. There is nothing for him, in short, but to take his stand on the high platform of the FOURTH COMMANDMENT. Let him have respect, in all his enactments on this subject, to the best interests of 'the strangers within his gates.' Let him take, as his model, the lofty patriotism of the governor of old, who, when his heart was grieved at the complicated sabbath desecration he beheld, contended with the nobles of Judah, and said, *What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the Sabbath-day? If ye do so again, I will lay hands on you.*

The interposition of civil authority may be of service, in the way of restraining many things injurious to religion. This is confessedly a point of great delicacy; and to define the full extent to which the magistrate is entitled or bound to go, in this department, must be acknowledged to be a

matter of no ordinary difficulty. On the general point, however, there is no difficulty at all. Because it is not easy, in every case, to describe exactly the limits of magistratical interference in the way of restraint, to conclude that the magistrate should not interfere in this way at all, is no better reasoning than it would be, to maintain that a father should have no manner of discipline in his family, because he may feel at a loss, in certain cases, to determine to what extent he should carry the restraints of parental authority. That restraint of some kind belongs to the civil ruler must be admitted. 'He is a revenger to execute wrath on him that doeth evil.' 'A wise king scattereth the wicked, and bringeth the wheel over them.' 'A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes.' 'Governors are sent for the punishment of evil doers.' 'Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.'* Now, that the restraint of evils which affect the interests of religion should come within the province of the magistrate, might be inferred from the tendency of religion to benefit civil society, which, of course, supposes a tendency in all irreligion to injure it. The scriptures confirm this view. They furnish us with examples of pious kings, whose authoritative and judicial suppression of blasphemy, idolatry, and Sabbath profanation, are spoken of with manifest commendation, while others, for the neglect of this, are reproved. Take the case of King Asa, for instance. 'And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God; for he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and broke down the images, and cut down the groves; and commanded Judah to seek the Lord God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. Also he took away, out of all the cities of Judah, the high places and the images, and the kingdom was quiet before him.'† The well-known words of Job show the conviction that was entertained by that individual, apart altogether from the judicial institutes of the Jews, that idolatry was a fit object of civil restraint. 'If I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness, and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: *this also were an iniquity*

* Rom. xiii. 4; Prov. xx. 26, 8; 1 Pet. ii. 14; Rom. xiii. 3.

† 2 Chron. xiv. 2—5.

to be punished by the judge; for I should have denied the God that is above.'* Gross blasphemy, profane swearing, open idolatry, and desecration of the Lord's day, are legitimate objects of magistratical interference; not merely as things hurtful to the commonwealth, and offensive to a majority of the members of society, but as injurious to religion, and highly displeasing to the Almighty. It is altogether out of the question to suppose that 'the minister of God,' in using his influence to put a stop to such iniquities, is to lay aside all regard to the glory of God, and to restrict himself to a low motive of political expediency. The thing is impossible. What is it that renders it politically expedient to restrain such evils, but that they are calculated to bring evil upon the community? And how is it that they bring evil upon the community, but by incurring the displeasure of God, and provoking him to visit them with providential rebukes? It is, as offences against religion, and on religious as well as political grounds, therefore, that the magistrate can alone interpose in cases of this kind. The manner in which the offences are to be met, and the degree of restraint which it may be necessary to exercise in particular cases, are matters in which great prudence and discretion will be required. Whether it may be proper to inflict civil pains, or to interpose only civil disabilities, or perhaps to exercise forbearance, must depend upon the nature and degree of the offences; and the determination of these points must be left to the judgment of the framers and executors of the constitution and laws. *Wisdom is profitable to direct.*

It is in vain to say, in reply to all this, that civil interference cannot promote inward reverence of God's name, or the spirituality of his worship, or the internal sanctification of his holy day. We know that it cannot. But it is not these things we are speaking of. We are speaking of overt acts of profanity, impiety, and immorality. And, although the authority of the civil magistrate cannot promote the former, it is fully within its power to restrain the latter, and by so doing, to confer no mean benefit on both society at large and the church. Nor will it do to plead, in opposition to what we have here advanced, that it interferes with liberty of conscience. The conscience has no inherent absolute rights; all the liberty it possesses is conferred

* Job. xxxi. 26—28.

upon it by God; and it is utterly absurd to suppose that any man possesses from God a right to blaspheme his name, to worship an idol, or to profane his sacred day. As well might a man claim a right to murder, to commit adultery, or to steal, if only his conscience might permit or even prompt him to perpetrate such atrocities. Were civil authority interposed, for the purpose of enforcing on men the profession of certain principles, or the observance of certain forms of worship, or of compelling them to wait on public ordinances on the Sabbath, there might be some ground for complaint on the score of violating the rights of conscience. But the restraint of gross and open acts of irreligion and ungodliness is quite a different thing, and can afford no legitimate ground for such an objection.

A nation may promote the interests of religion by contributing pecuniary support. For the erection of places of worship, for the maintenance of ministers, and for providing the elements requisite in the administration of at least one of the ordinances, the church must have emoluments. Now, a nation, as such, not only may, but ought to interest itself in providing these supplies. That there was a legal provision for similar purposes, under the Law, must be admitted. In what it consisted we wait not now to inquire. Neither do we wait to discuss, whether a nation ought to interfere in this matter by direct legal assessment, or only by giving encouragement to voluntary liberality. All that we insist upon is, the obligation of a nation to interfere some way or other. We observe that there was once an ample legal provision for religion, which was collected according to law, and could not be withheld by any one, without violating the commandment of God, incurring the divine displeasure, and subjecting to civil coercion.* Now, why should not something of the same kind exist in New Testament times? Is it so, that God has forbidden it? Show us the prohibition. God has, it is true, ordained that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel, and that he that is taught in the word should communicate to him that teacheth in all good things. But is the teacher to go forth only among such as are able and willing to pay; is he not also to go forth among those who have as yet no relish for

* Num. xviii. 26; 1 Sam. viii. 15; 2 Chron. xxxi. 4, 5; Neh. x. 32; xiii. 10, &c.

his spiritual communications, and who, consequently, cannot be expected to contribute for what they have yet to learn to appreciate? How is he to subsist, till his labours have been blessed for the conversion of a number sufficient to support him? And, supposing the teacher supported, how is the place of worship to be provided? By the voluntary contributions, do you say, of such as have already felt the power of Divine truth? Not to say that most of these have enough to do with themselves, does not this suppose religion to have been formerly introduced, and to have taken root to some extent in the land? thus shifting the difficulty only a step farther back, where it meets us again with all its force.

Is it insisted upon, that it is a *privilege*, as well as a duty, for the people to support religion themselves, and that legal support goes to deprive them of this privilege? Sure we are that the apostle Paul had no such transcendental view of Christian privilege; for, so far from thinking that he had done wrong, in preaching the gospel freely to the Corinthians, he boldly vindicates his conduct: 'Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? When I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man. In all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so I will keep myself.* Is it still contended that the scripture rule is, that those who receive the benefit of the gospel shall contribute to the support of the gospel? Be it so. And does the nation derive no benefit from the existence of religious institutions in a land?—If, after all, taking refuge in a word, it is insisted upon that the support of religion must be *voluntary*, we ask what should hinder it to be both legal and voluntary too? May not a thing be legal and voluntary at the same time? Every thing that is *legal* is not necessarily *compulsory*, as every thing that is *voluntary* is not necessarily *optional*. We do many things voluntarily every day, which it is not optional with us, as far as law and obligation are concerned, whether we shall do them or not. A legal assessment for the support of religion, it is easy to see, may be rendered compulsory, by those who ought to pay it voluntarily and cheerfully, refusing to do so. But on whom,

* 2 Cor. ii. 7, 9.

in this case, is the evil of compulsion to be charged? Why dwell, however, on such points as these? To what object, we ask, can the resources of a nation be, not only more harmlessly, but more profitably applied, than the maintenance and diffusion of that religion which exalteth a nation, and which is at once the glory and safety of a land? Shall countless sums be lavished on wars, and bridewells, and prisons, and penitentiaries, and all the machinery of legal, judicial, and police establishments, for the detection and punishment of crime; and shall not a farthing be given from the public purse for the support of those religious institutions, the due administration of which is calculated to effect the suppression of crime of every name, and thus, not only to advance the comfort of the community, but to save the expenditure of the national funds? Nay, do not the predictions which refer to the diffusion of Christ's kingdom in New Testament times, make mention expressly of the pecuniary contributions of persons in authority in their official character? 'The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring *presents:* the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer *gifts.* He shall live and to him shall be given of the *gold* of Sheba.—The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising—they shall bring *gold* and incense, and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord. Surely the isles will wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their *silver* and their *gold* with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.'*

Thus have we endeavoured to show, in a series of observations, the benefit which a nation, as such, has it in its power to confer on the church. This must be deemed a sufficient answer to those who would represent all national interference with religion as calculated only to injure it. To say that it is capable of being abused, is only what may be said of the very best things that exist. That it has never been abused, we have no design to maintain. But that such interposition of the civil power, as we have supposed, must necessarily tend to secularize and corrupt the religion of Christ, we cannot admit. Many, we are firmly persuaded, practise deceit upon themselves here, by confounding the *state* and the *world* with one another. The

* Ps. lxxii. 10, 15.; Is. lx. 3, 6, 9.

world of the ungodly, which is the kingdom of Satan, is confounded with civil society, which is the moral ordinance of God: and, because all connexion of the church with the former cannot but injure her, it is concluded that so must all connexion with the latter. But merely to name the distinction between the *state* and the *world*, is all that is necessary to detect the fallacy. Civil society and the church of Christ, being both ordinances of God, can have no *necessary* tendency to corrupt each other, but must be capable of dwelling together in friendly co-operation, and of exerting a mutually beneficial influence. And, as for the case of Constantine, so frequently and so vauntingly brought forward in support of the opposite opinion, who does not know that the corruptions which were brought to light at the period in question, had been long before in operation, and that the more flagrant of them proceeded from the excess of that very principle which is contended for, in opposition to all legal recognition of religion?

But, it may be asked, does not such a connexion as contended for, tend to confound church and state, to blend in confusion things that are essentially distinct? By no means. Our argument, not only is consistent with, but necessarily supposes, an essential distinction between the two. But *distinction* does not necessarily imply *hostility*. Things may be *different* without being *adverse*. That civil society and ecclesiastical society differ, we admit;—they differ in their immediate origin, objects and ends; in their form of administration; in the light in which they regard their subjects; and in the character of the effects they respectively produced. But they are not, on this account, necessarily opposed to each other. On the contrary, there are many things in which they agree;—they agree in their original author, God; in the rule and standard of their administration, the word of God; in their ultimate end, the glory of God; and in their subjection to the Messiah. They are, therefore, capable of existing in close combination, without being confounded. The church and the state were always distinct; yet we know that once they existed together in perfect harmony, without confusion: so that the objection in question is at variance as much with fact as with the very nature of the respective societies themselves.*

* 'It is not true, though it has been often recklessly affirmed by the

Fifthly. To say that the church and the state, that national society and true religion, are capable of existing together in harmonious co-operation, and of producing a mutually advantageous effect on each other, is, however, not saying all that may be said on this subject. We may go farther, and affirm that injurious consequences of the most frightful kind, would spring from insisting on their being entirely separated. The amount of pernicious consequence that should, in this way, ensue, it is impossible fully to depict. Society must, of course, in this case, forego all the advantages which, as we before observed, may be derived to it from religion, and religion all the advantages which may be derived to *it* from the countenance, encouragement, and support of the civil power. Not only must religion struggle, unbefriended and unaided, in its benevolent attempts to pervade the great mass of society with its principles, and to diffuse its light among the poor and the illiterate; but civil society must become essentially and avowedly infidel. If the nation must have nothing to do with religion, then, in the constitution of the country, there can be no acknowledgment of God, no recognition of the Bible. Electors may, in this case, feel themselves at full liberty, in the choice of their rulers, to throw aside all respect for

opponents of establishments, that under the former economy the church and the state were blended together. A most obvious distinction was marked between them. The church was not the nation, nor was the nation the church. Each had its distinct rulers, courts, laws, subjects, penalties, and duration. Moses and his successors were the rulers in the state; Aaron and his successors rulers in the church. The church had her courts of the synagogue and ecclesiastical sanhedrim; the state, those of the gate and the civil sanhedrim. The ceremonial laws were those of the church; the judicial those of the state. Civil and religious privileges were not necessarily extended to the same persons. Proselytes might be members of the church without participating in the privileges of the state; whilst, on the other hand, scandalous offenders against the ceremonial and the moral law, permitted to enjoy civil rights, were nevertheless debarred from the fellowship of the church. A distinction was marked, too, in respect of penalties. Those of the church were purely ecclesiastical, as casting out of the synagogue; those of the state extended to fine, and even to death. In short, the distinction between the Jewish church and state is obviously marked in their respective duration. The latter ended when it became a province of Rome; the former subsisted and retained its ecclesiastical character, down to the destruction of the temple, and the scattering abroad of the Jewish people among all nations.'—*Mackray's Defence of Civil Establishments*, p. 53.

religion, and allow themselves to be wholly swayed by the all-powerful influence of party politics. The rulers even must be set free from the trammels of an oath, which is a religious matter, and exempted from all obligation to recognize God in their official enactments. Every allusion to divine Providence may be justly characterized as 'cant and humbug.' There must be no prayers in the national assemblies. There must be no appeal to the divine law in the senate-house. The judge on the bench must be precluded from referring the unhappy culprit whom he condemns, to the solemnities of a judgment to come, or even of recommending him to betake to the blood of atonement for the salvation of his soul. The sabbath of the Lord may be employed, with impunity, in every kind of business and sport. And the nation, although as we have seen a moral subject of Messiah the Prince, must be debarred from even expressing its allegiance to its King!

Sixthly. But is such a separation as is contended for, practicable, even were it proved to be desirable? We venture to think that it is not. We see not how, in any case, there can be found a basis of national policy at all, where there is an entire disregard of all the sanctions of religion. But the separation is rendered more difficult still wherever Christianity exists. So extensive are the obligations, so powerful the principles of the religion of Jesus, that, where these are felt, it will be found utterly impossible to disregard their influence, even in the ordinary transactions of civil life. The ruler, if a Christian, will not feel himself at liberty to disregard the motives and the interests of religion, in the discharge of his official functions; neither will the subject, either in the choice of his rulers, or in his obedience to the laws. The very existence of the Christian church in a land, must render it impossible to legislate and act in the same way as if it had no existence there. In short, things civil and religious are so closely interwoven, in the circumstances and very constitution of man, that, to effect an entire separation between them, may safely be pronounced chimerical,—impossible if it were attempted, and foolish and wicked in no ordinary degree if it were possible.

It is easy to say, in opposition to the whole argument maintained on this subject, that Christ did not call in the aid of the civil power in support of his church at the com-

mencement; that it flourished notwithstanding, and in spite, too, of bloody persecutions, during the primitive ages; and that, from the time of its alliance with the state, its purity and prosperity began to decline. The case assumed in the latter part of this statement is, as has been often shown, not matter of fact. The corruptions of the Christian church, as already hinted, were in existence long before the time of Constantine, and the decline of her prosperity can be traced distinctly to other causes than the countenance extended to her by that distinguished individual. And, as to Christianity's having been established at first without the aid of the civil power, this circumstance would form an unanswerable objection to any one who should maintain, that religion could not exist or prosper without the aid of the civil magistrate. But this, be it remembered, is not our opinion. The question is not, whether religion can exist without national support, but what is the duty of nations towards the religion and church of Christ. And, if her primitive prosperity without the countenance of the state is to be pleaded as a valid reason why the church should always remain in the same circumstances, might we not, with equal propriety, contend that there should be no such thing as a course of preparatory education required of ministers; nay, that it is desirable that the civil authorities in a land should, not simply let religion alone, but that they should persecute it with all their might, as it was by means of unlearned men, and amid fire and blood, that the church, in that age, prospered and flourished? What the Head of the church may choose to do for her protection and support, in extraordinary circumstances, and in order to subserve the purpose of setting in a clearer light her spiritual independence and divine vitality, can form no rule of procedure in other circumstances. It is not for us to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. It is our duty, while we observe with devout adoration the workings of his providence, to take as our guide the dictates of his holy and infallible word. Nor does it become us to prescribe to God the manner in which the expression of his will, in any case, shall be conveyed to us. The want of a direct precept can form no valid objection, in the matter under consideration, any more than in other cases, such as infant baptism and the Christian sabbath, for which no di-

rect injunction can be pleaded, and whose obligation is admitted, on much the same sort of grounds as those on which the duty of nations to encourage and aid the true religion is supported.

Such are some of our reasons for maintaining that it is the duty of nations, in virtue of their moral subjection to the Messiah, to have respect to the interests of his church. The grand basis of this obligation, we beg to remind our readers, is the moral supremacy of Christ over the nations. From this, as we have already seen, springs the duty of extending their countenance and support to his church. The other arguments may be regarded as corollaries from this great principle or axiom. Indeed, both the church and the state being placed under the mediatorial dominion,—being, so to speak, only different moral provinces of the same King,—separate departments of one vast moral empire, it is not easy to conceive of them being so irreconcileably opposed as to be incapable of subsisting in close and friendly alliance with one another. The titles, *King of saints* and *King of kings*, imply nothing contradictory. They are inscribed on the same escutcheon; they sparkle on the same diadem; and, apart from the prejudices engendered by party contentions, one should think that they can call up, on being named, no feeling of incongruity. Let us not, then, be found guilty of attempting to put asunder what God has joined together.

It is impossible to review what we have written on the mediatorial dominion over the nations, without reflecting that this department of the Redeemer's administration and glory has not met with sufficient attention. Its importance it is impossible to deny. Yet it is lamentable to think how inadequately it has been appreciated. By some, it is almost entirely overlooked and treated with neglect. By others, it is denied and speculatively opposed. It is easier to account for, than to vindicate or excuse, such conduct. What friend of Messiah the Prince, but must lament—deeply lament, such a state of things. Oh! that men would throw aside their prejudices, and, not suffering themselves to be warped by their supposed temporal interests, would come forward and, at all hazards, acknowledge the Redeemer as 'Governor among the nations.'

The doctrine in question ought surely to be regarded as

entitled to occupy a prominent place in the contending of the witnesses;—as forming a chief part of the word of Christ's patience, for which it becomes his disciples to lift up a clear and manly testimony, before an ungodly world and rebellious nations. Instead of being passed over altogether, or thrown into obscurity, or treated with a mere passive assent, it ought to stand conspicuously out in the church's creed, to be frequently brought forward by her ministers, and clearly unfolded in all its grand associations, in all its practical bearings, and in all the fulness of its consoling power. It should be held up to the nations of the earth, to reprove them for their past rebellion, and to admonish them regarding their future procedure. It should be urged upon them, as calculated to remind them of the high and sacred duties they owe to the Messiah;—of their obligations to respect his glory, to take his law as their rule, to have regard to his authority in the choice of their office-bearers and in the subjection they yield to them, to swear allegiance to his crown, and to extend countenance and support to his church upon earth. Nor should it be omitted to remind them of the divine displeasure they incur, and the judicial visitations to which they expose themselves, by pursuing, as too many of them do, a course of unhallowed rebellion against the King of kings.

It is impossible, in connexion with the duty of nations toward the church, not to lament that the kingdoms of the world have been so little careful to select the true religion as the object of their fostering care. The continental nations have, for the most part, extended their favour to that church which is the Mystery of iniquity, and which is emphatically anti-christian. They have given their power to the Beast. Instead of favouring the chaste Spouse and Bride of Christ, the kings of the earth have taken to their embrace the Mother of Harlots and abominations of the earth; and, by so doing, have furnished the enemies of all alliance betwixt church and state, with a plausible, though ill-founded objection.

By our own nation, it is deeply to be lamented, civil countenance has been extensively given to the same false and pernicious system, both in the colonies and in Ireland. The protestant establishment of England itself, is, to a considerable extent, an establishment of error, being essentially prelatical, and otherwise loaded with a burdensome

mass of unscriptural and superstitious ceremonies. Even the Presbyterian establishment of Scotland, in so far as the creed and government of the church were prescribed by the state at the revolution settlement, and ordained because agreeable to the wishes of the people rather than founded on the word of God, and inasmuch as a decidedly Erastian power is both claimed and exercised over the church, particularly in the appointment of her ministers, is highly objectionable. Both the church and the state, it ought ever to be borne in mind, in entering into alliance for the purpose of securing the mutual advantages which such an alliance is calculated to subserve, are bound, in duty to Christ, to have respect at once to the *character* of the ally with whom they unite, and to the *nature* of the alliance that is formed between them. Both of these are indispensable to a legitimate and useful alliance. Neither must the state, on the one hand, confer support on error and superstition, nor the church, on the other, enter into association with an immoral and anti-christian power. And, even supposing the state and the church to be both what they ought to be, care must be taken that the union formed betwixt them, be not such as involves an encroachment of the one on the prerogatives of the other. It must be such as is perfectly consistent with the spiritual independence of the church, such as leaves her in the free and unfettered enjoyment and exercise of all the privileges and immunities that belong to her, by the grant of her glorious and divine Head.

How far this rule has been violated, with regard to the existing establishments of our land, it is not our present object to inquire, or to show. But it certainly becomes the friends of these institutions to consider, whether much of the opposition with which they are assailed and by which their very existence is threatened, may not arise from this source; and whether, for their stability and security, a thorough searching into every defect, an unsparing reform of every abuse, a complete purgation of every evil, may not be the course which true policy, as well as fidelity to Messiah the Prince, would seem to dictate. It is the existence of these abuses, they may rest assured, that has given weight and influence to the objections of their opponents; and we would, with all possible earnestness, counsel their speedy and complete rectification. It is certainly much to

be regretted, that a certain class, in their zeal against great and undeniable evils, have permitted themselves to be carried beyond this legitimate object of assault, and have assailed a glorious and scriptural *principle*. For this they are undoubtedly to be blamed. But it concerns those of the other class to bear in mind, that the whole blame does not rest with their opponents. Not a little of it is chargeable upon themselves, for countenancing and perpetuating those abuses of a good principle, which have brought the very principle itself into danger and disrepute. And having called upon the one party to attend to an immediate and thorough reform, we would earnestly and respectfully entreat the other to restrict their opposition to the evils in question. They will find here ample employment for all their artillery. In this department, while they conduct the warfare like men breathing the spirit of the gospel and seeking the interests of truth, let them spare no arrows. But oh! let them beware of pointing a single shaft against the sacred principle of Christ's moral supremacy over the kingdoms of the world. Let them shrink from entertaining a sentiment, or maintaining a theory, which would go to pluck from the head of Emmanuel the crown of the nations, and to blot from his escutcheon the resplendent title, *King of kings* and *Lord of lords*.

There are those who occupy neutral ground; who are connected with neither the one party nor the other; who stand aloof from existing establishments, on account of what they conceive to be wrong in them, and who yet feel themselves bound to contend for the principle that nations ought to have some respect for religion. Such we would recommend to keep their ground firmly, and to turn to good account the influence their peculiar position enables them to exercise. They may find it difficult to steer clear of taking a side, in a controversy which is waged with so much fierceness. But let them be persuaded that by doing so, they must impair their usefulness. At once their duty and their safety are to STAND STILL. Not that we mean that they should stand still in idleness or unconcern, but that they should continue to occupy the ground to which they believe those who have erred, on the one side and on the other, must ultimately come. Let them contend earnestly for the truth of the great principle, the adoption of which in its purity, is, they are persuaded, to bless, in the

end, both the church and the nations, with contentment, peace, holiness, and glory. And let them hold up to the view of all, the banner of CHRIST'S CROWN AND COVENANT, that both civil and ecclesiastical societies may come under its protection, and do homage to Him in whose name it is unfurled—even to Messiah the Prince! By identifying themselves entirely with the one or with the other class of combatants, they must give up something for which it is important they should strive, and can only subserve, at the best, the interests of a party: but by holding fast the position they now occupy, they may be of service to the general cause of the Redeemer. Let them, therefore, even should they thus run risk of forfeiting the approbation of both parties, dare to do so fearlessly and unshrinkingly.

The friends of truth, the subjects of Him who is King in Sion, must stand prepared to surrender the applause of man whose breath is in his nostrils; must value, above all things, the approbation of the Almighty; and aim, at all times, at being able to say in sincerity, *We serve the Lord Christ.* They will, thus, be prepared for taking a decided stand on their own proper ground, without being moved from it by the dread of singularity, and without suffering themselves to be swallowed up in the devouring vortex of party strife; while their very position of apparent neutrality will carry in it a distinct and striking testimony on behalf of the truth as it is in Jesus. *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown!*

CHAPTER X.

PERPETUITY OF THE MEDIATORIAL DOMINION.

The reign of Messiah the Prince is progressive, both as respects the hearts of men and the world at large. Neither his visible nor his invisible kingdom is complete at once. By the use of those special, and also of those common, means which he employs, he carries forward, with irresistible energy, his work of grace and his work of judgment, at once gradually subjugating his enemies and gathering in those given him by the Father. This work embraces a period of several thousands of years, during which his kingdom is making steady advancement. There is to be, even in this present world, a season of unspeakable grandeur, when light, love, liberty, peace, and holiness, shall prevail to an unprecedented extent. But it is in the state of glory that the kingdom of Christ is to receive its grand consummation.

By Christ's mediatorial reign in glory, we do not understand that government merely which he exercises in heaven, extending from the period of his exaltation to the end of the world. Much of his administration, during this period, has respect to his church upon earth, and to other things in subordination to her interests, as well as to the redeemed above. But what we mean by the mediatorial reign in glory, is the dominion which the exalted Mediator exercises, and will continue to exercise, over the redeemed above as such; a dominion which, we conceive, is not to be confined to the period that shall elapse at the final judgment, but shall stretch out into endless ages.

This, it will be readily perceived, is a subject of very great sublimity, and we may reasonably expect to find it involved in considerable mystery. It would argue great presumption, for a weak-sighted mortal to pretend to a complete understanding of such a subject. It is to be approached only with sentiments of profound veneration and humility, and with a fixed resolution to be guided by the light of divine revelation alone, avoiding all vain speculation, and humbly determining not to be wise above what is written.

It is a topic on which, it appears, some diversity of sentiment existed. From an expression in the writings of the apostle Paul,* many have been led to form the idea, that, at the end of all things, the mediatorial reign is to terminate altogether, and the government of the kingdom to devolve, through eternity, on God essentially considered. But there seems to be some confusion of ideas in the minds of those who have expressed themselves to this effect, inasmuch as, in speaking of it, they use language which is inconsistent with the notion itself. The venerable Dr. Owen says, in one place, 'at the end of this dispensation, he shall give up the kingdom to God, even the Father, or *cease from the administration of his mediatorial office and power.*' And again, 'when this work is perfectly fulfilled and ended, then shall *all the mediatory actings of Christ cease for ever.*' Yet he says, elsewhere, in explanation of his meaning on this subject, 'I would extend this no further than as to what concerneth the exercise of Christ's mediatory office with respect unto the church here below, and the enemies of it;' while he admits, 'that the person of Christ, in and by his human nature, shall be for ever the immediate head of the whole glorified creation—the means and way of communication between God and his glorified saints for ever—the eternal object of divine glory, praise, and worship.'† From these expressions, it is plain that this distinguished divine was not of opinion that the reign of the Mediator was not to be perpetual, or that it was to be abrogated, properly speaking, at the conclusion of the present state, but, on the contrary, that it was to continue, in

* 1 Cor. xv. 24. 'Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father,' &c.

† Owen's Works, vol. xii. pp. 294, 295, 338, 339.

some state or another, for ever. Such being his sentiment, it is to be regretted that he should have allowed himself to speak on the subject without sufficient precision, and to use language which seems to give countenance to the opposite opinion.

Another writer of merited celebrity, in our own day, speaking of what Christ will do at the period in question, says, 'As a faithful ambassador, whose commission is finished, he will honourably *give it back* to Him who appointed him, and will *return to his own personal station, as the divine and eternal Son;* and then will a new order of the moral universe commence, and the unspeakably vast assemblage of holy creatures, delivered and secured from sin and misery, shall possess the IMMEDIATE fruition of the Father.'* This language seems to convey the idea, that it was the opinion of this writer, that the reign of Christ as Mediator, even over the church, should come to an end; for he speaks in the context of 'the *termination* of the mediatorial reign;'† and, elsewhere, of 'the great *parenthesis* of the mediatorial administration.'‡ It is but fair, however, to take notice of certain qualifying clauses which are thrown in, and which illustrate the confusion of ideas of which we have complained. 'When all its designs,' says Dr. Smith, 'are accomplished, the mediatorial system, *as to all these modes of its exercise* shall cease,' referring to what he had said before, of 'the giving and enforcing of religious laws, the diffusion and success of the gospel, the heavenly intercession, the operations of divine grace, the vanquishing of all anti-christian and other inimical powers, and the adjudication of eternal rewards and punishments.' He also adds, 'Imperfect and obscure as must be our conceptions of the termination of the mediatorial reign, it is self-evident that it can, in no respect, diminish the honours of the Redeemer, or abate the regards of the redeemed. .... The connexion of Christ and his saints is indissoluble; neither things present nor things to come shall separate them from his love: and the final state of true Christians is expressly called an entering into the ETERNAL kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' But, after attaching all due weight to this language, as tending to modify what was quoted above, we

* Dr. P. Smith on the Messiah, iii. 257. † P. 258,
‡ Smith on Sacrifice, p. 92,

find it impossible to look upon the expressions in question as otherwise than unguarded and erroneous.

To talk of Christ's *returning* to his own personal station as the Divine and Eternal Son, certainly implies that he must have left his personal station: but is it so? He stooped, indeed, from his personal dignity, but he never laid it aside. The rank of divine and eternal Son was never lost. At the moment of his deepest humiliation, he possessed the personal dignity of the Son of God, and indeed, but for this, his humiliation would have been in vain. This Dr. Smith certainly knows and believes. To speak, as this writer does, of the redeemed in glory possessing the IMMEDIATE fruition of the Father, in the sense of excluding the intervention of the Mediator, is plainly at variance with his own admission, that the connexion of Christ and his saints is *indissoluble*, and that the final state is the *eternal* kingdom of our Lord and Saviour?

The same view of the temporary duration of the mediatorial dominion, is supported in the theological lectures of a late eminent Professor of Divinity, in one of our dissenting churches. This learned author in question speaks of the text at present under consideration as 'confessedly obscure,' and subjoins to his explanation the following modest statement:—'What has now been said, is proposed solely as a probable opinion: it would be presumptuous to speak confidently on a subject so obscure.'* The views of this writer will fall to be examined in the sequel.

With all due deference to the distinguished individuals, alluded to above, we would venture to submit, whether the saying of the apostle may not, after all, be satisfactorily explained, in full consistency with the proper perpetuity of Christ's dominion as Mediator. The passage, in its connexion, stands thus:—'Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. . . . . And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.'†

* See Dr. Dick's Lectures, vol. iii. pp. 239—245.
† 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

It is necessary to take the whole passage into consideration. The meaning of any one phrase in it, must be consistent with that of others. The apostle cannot contradict himself. It is, of course, requisite that our explanation of one clause agree with that of another. And, if this reasonable principle is closely adhered to, in the interpretation of the apostle's language, we apprehend it will be found impossible to explain the delivering up of the kingdom, so as to imply that the mediatorial reign shall ever altogether cease. We remark, then, that such a view appears to be utterly at variance with the expression—'then shall the Son also be subject unto Him.' In what sense, we ask, but that of Mediator, can any Trinitarian understand the Son to be subject to the Father through eternity? As God, personally considered, the Son is in every respect equal to the Father. Subjection or subordination necessarily implies inferiority of some kind or another; but it is only in an *official* capacity that inferiority, in any sense, can be ascribed to the Son of God. Personally, he 'counts it no robbery to be *equal* with God;' he is 'Jehovah's *fellow*.' One of the writers above spoken of, has been led, by the theory of interpretation which he adopts, to use language on this subject, in our opinion, most unguarded and indefensible. 'The eternal Son of God,' says Dr. Pye Smith, 'is, notwithstanding his Divine nature, subordinate in the order of Deity, and even perfectly obedient to the Father. To have been thus subject to the Father, from all eternity and by the necessity of the Divine personality, is no more incongruous with the proper and essential Divinity of the Son, than it will be, after the consummation of the present system of things, when the great parenthesis of the mediatorial administration shall be completed, and God shall be all in all.'* What the writer of these words means by *a necessary and eternal subordination or subjection of the Son to the Father, apart from all respect to the mediatorial economy*, we know not. But, we frankly confess for ourselves, that we can form no idea of any such thing, without adopting the Socinian or the Arian heresy. The slightest degree of such subordination appears to us to be perfectly 'incongruous with the proper and essential Divinity of the Son;' and to speak of such a thing is to us alto-

* Smith on Sacrifices, pp. 91, 92.

gether revolting. It is obvious that this respected author has been betrayed into the use of such language, solely by his finding it necessary to reconcile the everlasting subjection of the Son with the preconceived notion that his mediatorial character and reign are to cease at the end of the world. And to us it appears no slight presumption against the correctness of this latter notion altogether, that so able, and clear, and accurate a supporter of the doctrine of our Lord's divinity, should have found it necessary, in speaking of it, to express himself in language so obscure, contradictory, and repulsive. Believing as we do, on the authority of this passage itself, that the Son is to be eternally subject to the Father, we find it impossible to separate this idea from that of the strict perpetuity of his mediatory office. But what, it will be asked, are we, in this case, to make of the *delivering up* of the kingdom?

The term kingdom, does not, in the instance before us, necessarily signify *kingship*, reign, or the possession and exercise of kingly power; but dominion in the sense of territory, or realm,—that, in short, over which the king reigns. The kingdom of Christ, in this sense, is, as we have shown, most extensive. Besides his church, or spiritual kingdom, it includes all things in the world, in subordination to her interests. And it is the opinion of some excellent and sound theologians, that the kingdom to be delivered up at the end of time is the latter of these—his government over things without the church, and more especially her enemies. It is of his reign over 'enemies,' that the apostle is speaking at the time. This, as we before remarked, is the opinion of Dr. Owen, who expressly says, that the delivering up of the kingdom he would 'extend no farther than as unto what concerneth the exercise of Christ's mediatorial office with respect unto the church *here below*, and the *enemies* of it.' Such also is the view of Dr. Doddridge, who, in a note to his exposition of the passage in question, says, 'To me it appears that the *kingdom* to be given up is the rule of this *lower world*, which is then to be consumed.' This view of the subject is certainly free from the objection to which that we are combating is exposed. It is also quite agreeable to the context, and perfectly consistent with the perpetuity of the mediatorial reign.

Without, however, taking the word *kingdom* in so re-

stricted a sense; viewing it even as inclusive of the church, the proper realm of the mediatorial king, may not the phrase under review be satisfactorily explained on another principle? It is all along taken for granted, that the words 'deliver up' signify *abandon, surrender, give over;* and so they are understood to import that the divine Mediator shall return into the hands of the Father the *official* commission received from him, and henceforward exercise only a *personal* dominion. But may not the original term, παραδῷ, be understood to signify, only bringing the work he was commissioned to perform to a state of completion, and presenting it in that finished state to him from whom the commission was derived, by way of giving account of the trust committed to him? Certain it is that the Greek verb here employed, is used in the New Testament in this very sense. 'But when the fruit is brought forth (marg. *ripe*, Gr. παραδῷ) immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.'* Here the verb bears the idea of completion or perfection, ripeness or maturity. Now, at the end of the world, the kingdom of the Messiah shall have been brought to perfection; the work given him to do shall have been finished. Those given him by the Father shall have been found out, redeemed, sanctified, saved, and gathered all together into one; their enemies, even death *itself*, shall have been subdued; and the whole scheme of providence shall have been developed and wound up. The Mediator shall, then, appear and give in to the Father a full account of his mediatorial undertaking; presenting to him the kingdom in that state of consummation to which he shall then have brought it; and receiving from him a clear testimony of his approbation. This is perfectly consonant with the idea that the Son shall retain and exercise his mediatorial authority over his own proper kingdom for ever. 'This kingdom,' says Theophylact, 'he delivers to his Father, by achieving and *accomplishing the purposes* of it. Thus, for instance, if a king commits to his son the management of a war against nations that have rebelled, when the war is finished, and the nations again reduced to subjection, then he is said to deliver up the war to his Father, i. e. *show that he has accomplished the work committed to him.*'†

* Mark iv. 19. † Bloomfield's Recensia Synoptica, vol. vi. p. 681.

It is admitted, on all hands, that there must be, at the period alluded to, an entire change in the mode of administering the kingdom. The mediatorial dominion is conducted at present by means of ordinances and providences. The preaching of the gospel, the dispensation of sacraments, the services of ministers, and the over-ruling of the events that fall out in both the natural and the moral worlds, are all made subservient to the interests of the church. At the period alluded to, these shall cease. Christ has given apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, 'for the *perfecting* of the saints, TILL they come to a *perfect* man, to the measure of the *stature* of the *fulness* of Christ.' By eating bread and drinking wine, believers 'show forth the Lord's death TILL he come;' but then they are to be introduced to the marriage supper of the Lamb. We have already adverted to the language of Dr. Smith, which accords with this view, when he says that the 'mediatorial system, *as to all these modes of its exercise*, shall cease.' We may add the language of Calvin, who, after quoting the words of the apostle respecting the delivering up of the kingdom unto the Father, says, 'he only intends, that in that perfect glory *the administration of the kingdom will not be the same as it is at present.*'* There is thus suggested another principle on which this difficult but interesting text may be interpreted, without supposing a cessation of the mediatorial dominion and character. At present the administration of the kingdom is conducted through the intervention of outward instruments: afterwards it shall be immediate, direct, personal. According to this interpretation, the phrase, 'that God may be all in all,' means that a new mode of intercourse with the Deity shall then be introduced, to the exclusion, not of the Mediator, but only of those institutions and ordinances which were deemed necessary for the saints in their present state of existence. In the triumphant state, they shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; which is, however, perfectly consistent with their receiving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

In harmony with these views of this difficult passage, especially with the first, is the opinion of an eminent

* Calv. Inst. Bk. II. ch. xv. § 5.

German divine, one of the most triumphant combatants of the system of theology which is unhappily too fashionable in that country. From his dissertation on the meaning of 'the kingdom of heaven,' we give the following extract, for whose length, it is presumed no apology is necessary, as the work from which it is taken is not generally circulated.

'The declarations of David (Psalm cx. 1.) and of St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 24, 58),' says Professor Storr, 'ought not to be taken in an opposite sense. Nor does it seem difficult to perceive, that their meaning is far different from this. For, since an *eternal* priesthood is attributed to the Messiah, and this is very closely allied to his *kingdom*, it is evident that they intend to deny eternity to the latter. Therefore ἑως in Psalm cx. 1, does not mean, that, when every enemy has been subdued, the government is to be taken away from Christ, but as the general object of this whole psalm is to show, that the designs of his enemies against the divine prince would at length have an ending altogether different from that which they expected, it was in exact conformity with such a design to establish this point, especially, that the divinely appointed Lord should reign, until all his enemies should be subjected to *his own* power. Which does not mean that he to whose government the enemies should be subjected (which circumstance proves of itself the continuance of that government,) should then resign his power; but, on the other hand, the result of the whole matter is declared to be this, that they who had refused to acknowledge this prince, and wished to remove him by force from his government, are all *overthrown* and confounded, while he *himself*, on the contrary, *is sitting at the right hand of God*. He shall reign for a considerable time in the midst of enemies, securely expecting an end of the rebellion; but, while he himself is sitting at the right hand of God, it shall at length come to pass, that all his adversaries shall be reduced under subjection to *his* authority. Such being the meaning of the psalm, and this sense of it being recognized by St. Paul himself, who has evidently made the dignity of the Messiah, described in the psalm, co-equal with his life, which he shows to be eternal, we seem to be going quite in opposition to his design, by supposing that in 1 Cor. xv. any *end* is assigned to the Messiah's kingdom. Therefore, the government, which it is said in verse 24, he shall restore to God, even the Father,

must not be supposed to mean *Christ's* government, but that of *every opposing power*, which is evidently declared to be *destroyed*, that the power may be restored to God. For since those who set themselves against Christ, at the same time resist *God* also; the government is restored to *God* when it is restored to *Christ*, subduing those who are at the same time the enemies of himself and of God, and thus recovering the government for God and for himself, from the enemies who had usurped it. That this is the meaning of the passage under discussion, appears to me to be confirmed also by what immediately follows. For St. Paul clearly shows, in 1 Cor. xv. 27, that verse 25 by no means expresses, in the words ἄχρις οὗ, a limit and end of Christ's goverment; but that all that we are to understand is, that all things, and therefore all enemies also, are to be subjected to the empire of Christ. According to this interpretation, therefore, the general drift of the apostle will be this; that for all the friends of Christ who, after the example of himself, who was the first that rose again, have been recalled from death to a life of blessedness, an end is at hand to which both the expectations of believers are directed, and the divine promises, upon which these expectations rest, all point. For that this is as it were the scope and end of the divine promises, that the empire of Christ will at length so far prevail, that all enemies shall be subjected to him, of whom death must be reckoned the last which will be destroyed by the resurrection of those who have died in the faith. For that God has put all things, and therefore all enemies, under him. That, therefore, when Christ shall have destroyed death, and also every opposing power, and thus shall have restored the kingdom to the Father; i. e. when he shall have caused it to come to pass, that God every where prevails, and his majesty is universally acknowledged, some rejoicing exceedingly in God their King, and deriving their whole pleasure and happiness from this source, from which they see and inwardly feel it to flow, i. e. from the all-powerful and benignant government of God, with never-ceasing reverence,—others, on the contrary, feeling with terror the power of his just government, and not daring to open their mouths against him;—then shall come the end. Nor should it seem strange, that the discourse in verse 24, changed from the government of Christ, who, it was said,

should destroy every opposing power to the Father, to whom the kingdom is said to be delivered up by Christ. The reason of this, the apostle adds, in verses 27, 28: 'When it is written that all things are put under him (by another), it is manifest, that he is to be excepted who put all things under him. Since, moreover, all things are put under him (by the Father), the Son himself also will be subject to him, who has put all things under him, so that God is therefore all in all.' When St. Paul magnificently describes that great power of the *man* Jesus, which is able to overthrow every enemy, and even death itself, this kingdom of Christ, thus august, and delivered from the injury and destruction of every opposing power, he gives to God the Father, not in order to show that it ceases to be Christ's, but that all things may at last be referred to the glory of God the Father, especially as the psalms which he had in his mind, when he spoke of that τελος, treated the same subject in a similar manner. But as we read that the Father subjected all enemies to Christ, and that Christ subjected them to himself, so he who is said in 1 Cor. xv. 24, to restore the kingdom to the Father, after the discomfiture of his enemies, may also be said to assert the authority and dignity of *his own* government. In other places, we certainly find it said that, even after the conquest of his enemies, *Christ* shall continue to reign.'*

It thus appears, that the passage in question admits of being explained, on various principles, in harmony with the sentiment that the mediatorial character and reign are to continue for ever. We do not take upon us to determine which of these views is the correct one, but we beg it to be remembered that, whether we have hit on the right interpretation or not, in any of the preceding observations, the passage itself asserts the perpetuity in question, and of course must be capable of explanation consistently with this view. The Son is to be *subject to the Father for ever*, which cannot be if he is not to be Mediator for ever. Having thus, we hope, successfully removed this stumbling block which meets us at the very threshold of our subject, we proceed to submit farther evidence in support of the sentiment that Christ as Mediator is to reign for ever.

* Dissertation on the meaning of *the kingdom of heaven*, by Gottlobb Christian Storr, late professor of Theology in the University of Tubingen.—*Biblical Cabinet*, *No.* ix. *pp.* 26—37.

We go at once to the scriptures. 'Thy throne, O God, is *for ever and ever.*—His name shall endure *for ever.*—Thy kingdom is an *everlasting* kingdom, and thy dominion endureth *throughout all generations.*—Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be *no end*, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment, and with justice, from henceforth, even *for ever.*—In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which *shall never be destroyed:* and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall *stand for ever.*—His dominion is an *everlasting* dominion which *shall not pass away* and his kingdom that which *shall not be destroyed.*—He shall reign over the house of Jacob *for ever;* and of his kingdom there shall be *no end.*—An entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the *everlasting* kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign *for ever and ever.*'* All these passages refer to the reign of Christ as Mediator. The language employed is strongly and fully expressive of perpetuity. It is true, the terms in question are not always expressive of absolute eternity; but they are the strongest, be it remarked, that can be found to denote strict perpetuity; and, where they must be understood with any limitation, this arises from the nature of the subject spoken of, and not from the terms themselves. They express in themselves the longest possible duration of which the things spoken of admit. Unless, therefore, it can be proved that there is something about the mediatorial dominion which renders it necessary that it should terminate, the passages quoted must be understood as affirming, without doubt, that it shall endure for ever. Stronger phraseology cannot be found to prove even the eternity of God's existence, or of future rewards and punishments.

The doctrine in question is confirmed and illustrated by the resplendent title, given to Christ, of *King of glory.* In a psalm which is admitted to refer to the ascension of the Redeemer, this designation is applied to him emphati-

* Ps. xlv. 6. lxxii. 17. cxlv. 13; Is. ix. 7. Dan. ii. 44. vii. 14; Luke i. 33; 2 Pet. i. 11; Rev. xi. 15.

cally again and again. Myriads of angelic heralds, as they demand admission for him within the portals of the celestial palace, shout, 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the *King of glory* shall come in;' and when the question is propounded, 'Who is this King of glory?' they meet it with the unhesitating response, 'The Lord of Hosts, he is the *King of Glory*.'* To remove all hesitation about the application of this sublime passage to the Mediator, we have only to advert to the writings of the apostles, where we find him spoken of under the same magnificent appellation. 'Which none of the princes of this world knew,' says Paul, 'for had they known it, they would not have crucified the *Lord of Glory*.'† 'My brethren,' says James, 'have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord of Glory*, with respect of persons.'‡ These passages, when compared with another in which Jehovah is spoken of as '*the God of Glory*,'‖ cannot fail to leave the impression, on the mind of the humble and candid reader, that the divine Mediator, in his official capacity, is to exercise an undoubted sovereignty over the eternal world, regulating and dispensing for ever the communications of celestial bliss. *Glory* is the term peculiarly employed, both by the inspired writers and by others, to denote the state of heavenly felicity, prepared for the people of God, which is to continue for ever; and the title *king* or *lord*, denotes government over that state. So far from supposing that this title does not belong to him, or that it belongs to him only for a limited period, it would seem more consonant with scripture and right reason to conclude, that it is to constitute his most appropriate and enduring designation, and that all his other titles, *King of Sion*, *King of saints*, and *King of nations*, are to merge at last in this one, KING OF GLORY.

It would seem necessary, to the proper *reward of Christ* for his mediatorial work, that the duration of his reign should extend beyond the period of the consummation of all things. We have before adverted to the claim which he has to reward, and have spoken of the mediatorial dominion itself as partaking of the nature of reward. But, up to the moment of the final judgment, his work itself shall be unfinished. He shall be all the while doing the work for

* Ps. xxiv. 7—10. † 1 Cor. ii. 8. ‡ James ii. 1. ‖ Acts vii. ii.

which he is to be rewarded. Till the end of all things, he shall be constantly engaged, subduing his enemies; converting them into friends; carrying on the work of grace in their hearts, and carrying forward the scheme of divine dispensations in the world; gathering his people's souls to himself; raising their bodies from the dead; acquitting them from all condemnation; and consigning the wicked to never-ending punishment. During all this period, he is, in a sense, making to himself a kingdom. His reward, as consisting in the full possession of his kingdom, distinguished from his work in preparing it for himself, it thus appears, cannot commence till the time when, according to the supposition of some, his mediatorial character is to cease altogether. No small part of this reward, indeed, is to consist in the perfect salvation of the redeemed; but they will not and cannot be made perfect in soul and body till the last day; not till then can the blessed Redeemer present his church 'holy, unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight—a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.' And are we to suppose that, just when the kingdom is completed, the government of it is to be abandoned? that, just when it has reached the summit of its perfection, he who has brought it to this pitch is to cease to have any connexion with it? that just when he has established his throne, completed his conquest, and secured the privileges and glory of his subjects, that moment the crown is to be plucked from his head, and the sceptre to drop from his hand? How much more natural to think, that then his crown shall beam forth with a brighter lustre, and his sceptre be swayed with more undisputed sovereignty!

It will not do to say, 'that the glory of having once possessed the kingdom and administered it with wisdom and righteousness will ever remain to him, and will call forth a tribute of praise from the countless myriads of his subjects.'* For it cannot be that glory and praise for the work of redemption, are to be ascribed to him in any other character than that of Redeemer. He cannot be rewarded in one character, for work which he performs in another character. He cannot be rewarded as God, for what he does as Mediator. That he should be rewarded personally, is indeed

* Dr. Dick.

utterly impossible, on any supposition whatever; but, even supposing it possible, it is contradictory to speak of his being rewarded essentially for work that is official. We need have no hesitation, therefore, in joining in the apostolical doxology, in which everlasting praise is ascribed to him as Mediator:—'To the only wise God *our Saviour*, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and FOR EVER. Amen.'*

Indeed, that the mediatorial character and dominion should cease, would seem to be *impossible*. The relation subsisting betwixt the Redeemer and the redeemed must be perpetual. If *they* are to retain for ever the character of redeemed, *He* must surely retain that of Redeemer. A redeemer there cannot be without some that are redeemed: no more can there be redeemed without a redeemer. And, unless the redeemer can forget the redeemed, there must be feelings of delight and complacency, and deep affection, and interest, with which *He* must ever regard *them:* and, unless the redeemed can forget their redeemer, there are sentiments of gratitude, and love, and high esteem, and regard, with which *they* must ever respect *Him*. But that either Redeemer or redeemed should ever, through eternity, forget one another, is altogether inconceivable. It thus appears to be impossible that the mediatorial character should ever cease. Indeed, so powerfully is this consideration felt by one of the writers quoted above, who hold the idea of a termination of the mediatorial reign, that, after speaking of it, he adds, 'It is self-evident that it can, in no respect, diminish the honours of the Redeemer, or abate the regards of the redeemed. To suppose this would be to suppose the loss of memory itself in those pure and blessed minds.'† We ask nothing more than what is here admitted, as a proof that the mediatorial character and reign shall never terminate.

It is rendered impossible, also, by the inseparable union subsisting betwixt the divine and human natures of Christ. This union, formed at his incarnation, is indissoluble. When his humiliation terminated, his human nature was raised from the dead and taken by him to glory. In the kingdom of glory, it is destined to form a monument of divine condescension and love throughout eternity. An-

* Jude 25. † Dr. P. Smith.

nihilated it cannot be; the very thought is revolting. A separate subsistence it never had, and never can have; the idea of such a thing is scarcely less shocking. There is no alternative, then, but that it shall abide for ever in close and mysterious union with the person of the Son of God. Need we any thing more to convice us, of the absolute perpetuity of the mediatorial character? In what other character can he exist as "God-man, Emanuel, God with us?'

But, how, admitting it to be possible, are we to suppose that the cessation of the mediatorial dominion shall be brought about? Is it to be understood that he will abdicate the throne himself, voluntarily, and of his own accord? The office and the honour attached to it are too dear to him to admit of his doing so, without some necessity for it which has never yet been shown to exist. Shall he be dethroned, forcibly deprived of his power, and degraded from the office which he has so honourably and efficiently filled? It is impossible to conjecture by whom this should be done. It cannot be by his own people; for they feel his rule to be at once their safety and their honour. It cannot be by angels; for they also are made subject to him, and delight to do him homage. By devils it cannot be; for they, like his other enemies, shall then be put under his feet. There is but one other supposable source from which such an event can originate, and it is more unreasonable than all the rest—his Father. But He who has given him power, and set on his head a crown of purest gold, has destined that 'upon himself shall his crown flourish, and given him length of days FOR EVER AND EVER.'

The *necessities of the redeemed*, not less than the reward of the Redeemer, appear to us to require the continuance for ever of his mediatorial character. This, indeed, is the ground on which the sentiment for which we are contending is opposed. It is supposed that there can be no need for mediatorial administrations after the final judgment, that then the scheme of redemption shall be fully executed, and the official character may be laid aside as no longer required.

> Then thou thy regal sceptre shalt lay by
> For regal sceptre thou no more shalt need;
> God shall be all in all.
>
> *Milton.*

'The kingdom will end,' says one of the writers on this subject, 'when its design is accomplished; he will cease to exercise an authority which has no longer an object.' 'Nothing will remain to be done by the power with which our Saviour was invested at his ascension; and, his work being finished, his commission will expire.' 'May we not conceive his mediation to terminate like any other plan, in the execution of which the intention of the contriver has been fulfilled? Why should intercession continue, when there are no sins to be forgiven, and no wants to be supplied, and when the objects of redeeming love are established in a state of perfection beyond the possibility of failure.' However plausible the statements contained in these extracts, we have but to look closely at them to see that they assume the very point to be proved, that they take for granted the very matter in dispute, namely, that through eternity there shall exist no need for the mediatorial administration of our Lord. This we are disposed to question. We freely admit that there will not be need for the same kind of administration; the grounds of necessity will be different from what they were before. The King of Glory will have no need to dispense pardon, to subdue rebellious passions, to ward off enemies, or to intercede for the bestowment of the initiatory blessings of redemption. But are there no other things that may call for the exercise of the mediatorial functions? We submit that there are.

May not the continuance of the relations subsisting between Christ and his people render this necessary? In the day of grace, a vital union is formed on the part of the renewed soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, which is essential to the privileges and duties of the Christian life and character. In consequence of this, Christ becomes, to the believer, at once a Head of merit—conferring on him a right to all new covenant benefits, and a Head of influence—communicating to him all needed supplies of strength and enjoyment. It is clearly to him *as Mediator* that this union is formed. Now this union is indissoluble. Christ can never cease to be the Head of merit and of influence to his people. Their right to all the blessings, and their fitness for all the services, and their experience of all the pleasures, of the celestial state, spring from their relation to him. They can spring, neither from themselves, nor from God absolutely considered. Nor are they the mere *effects* of what Christ

has done, but effects to the continued existence of which their abiding in him is indispensable. But they could not abide in him as Mediator, unless he continued to be Mediator; and it is the rejoicing of believers' hearts to know that the union between them and their Lord shall never be dissolved. 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? I am persuaded that neither *death*, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor *things to come*, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

The redeemed in glory are to be engaged, throughout eternity, in the service of God. 'They serve him day and night in his temple. His servants shall serve him.'† While studying the character and works of Jehovah himself, hymning his praises, and performing offices of friendship to one another, they shall be actively employed in serving the Lord. And how are these services to find acceptance with God, but through the merits and intercession of the Mediator? As sinners saved, as captives redeemed, they can never claim acceptance on their own merit. Nor does it even appear consonant to the character of the great and holy God, to suppose him holding absolute and immediate intercourse with persons of this description, such as he holds with the angels who have never sinned. Moral fitness or propriety would seem to require, that the fellowship of redeemed men with the Majesty of heaven and of earth, should ever be conducted so as to indicate the peculiarity of their character, and to distinguish them from the unfallen sons of light. And this, we have reason to believe, will be done, by all their communion with God being through a Mediator, without whose intervention they shall not receive one ray of light, or one token of divine regard.

The very nature of the believer's glorious reward, supposes the perpetuity of Christ's mediatorial character. In what is this reward to consist, but in being associated with him in his kingdom? It is abundantly plain, from the following sayings of holy writ, that *regal dignity in connexion with Christ* is to constitute a part, at least, of the reward of the redeemed. 'When the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall SIT UPON TWELVE THRONES,

* Rom. viii. 35, 38, 39. † Rev. vii. 16.—xxii. 3.

judging the twelve tribes of Israel—They who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, shall REIGN IN LIFE by one Jesus Christ—If we suffer we shall also REIGN WITH HIM—They shall REIGN for ever and ever—To him that overcometh will I grant to SIT WITH ME ON MY THRONE.'* According to the opinion we are combating, how are these expressions to be interpreted? The saints, agreeably to these scriptures, are to reign in glory with Christ as Mediator: but, according to the opinion in question, Christ as Mediator is not to reign in glory at all, posterior to the consummation of all things. His reign is to terminate just when theirs is beginning. When theirs commences his ceases. As they ascend *their* throne he abdicates *his*. When they are made kings to God, he is to be king no more.

Moreover, the perpetuation as well as the nature of the reward of the redeemed, supposes the continuance of the mediatorial dominion. To the continued efficacy of the Saviour's sacrifice, the continued enjoyment of the blessings it procured is to be ascribed. But continued efficacy and application suppose a continued administration, which can only be conducted by the Saviour himself. In the same manner as the suspension of that divine energy by which all things are upheld, would involve the annihilation of all things, so, it appears to us, would the suspension of the mediatorial administration involve the annihilation of all the eternal privileges of redemption. It is the prerogative of a king to reward his subjects; but the King of saints must not only confer, but perpetuate, the reward of his people. In whatever this reward may be supposed to consist,—in dignity, honour, exaltation, fellowship, or blissful communications,—it will require to be continued, and this can be secured only by the administration of the King of glory.

To the redeemed before the throne, divine communications shall be constantly dealt out, through eternity. This is no way inconsistent with their being made perfect in glory at the last day. The perfection of creatures must never be identified with infinity. To be made perfect in knowledge, holiness, love, does not suppose the possession of these qualities in an infinite degree. Such a thing is

* Matt. xix. 28; Rom. v. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. xxii. 5. v. 21.

impossible. It only means being free from the imperfections of the present state, while abundant room is left for progressive advancement in every attribute of intellectual and moral being. If angels advance, as we know they do, why may not the redeemed? The infinite character of the sources of eternal bliss admits of endless progression; while the necessary increase of capacity, arising from the exercise of all the faculties, renders progressive communication and advancement as unavoidable in itself as it is essential to the happiness of beings constituted as men are. We have every reason, therefore, to conclude, that there will be everlasting communications of light, life, power, love, and ineffable satisfaction, made to the souls of the redeemed. And through what channel shall these communications flow? Surely through the medium of the King of glory. New covenant blessings can flow only through the Mediator of the covenant. It is not enough that Jesus as Mediator has procured for his people the provisions of the covenant, and brought them in safety to heaven, but he shall administer to them for ever the fulness of his Father's house. 'The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.' 'The pure river of the water of life' proceeds out of the throne, not merely of God, but '*of the Lamb.*'*

It is surely reasonable to suppose that, as the heavenly state is so often spoken of as a kingdom, it must have a ruler. A kingdom necessarily supposes the existence of a king who exercises sovereign rule over it so long as it exists. But the character of the king must bear a relation to the nature of the kingdom. Now, the kingdom of heaven being a mediatorial kingdom, cannot be consistently supposed to be presided over by any but a mediatorial king. Accordingly, we find everlasting dominion ascribed to Christ as Mediator. Jude says, 'To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, and *dominion*, and power, both now and *for ever*.' Of the Prince of the kings of the earth, we find John the divine saying, 'To him be glory and *dominion* for *ever and ever*.' Every creature in heaven and on earth is, also, represented as shouting, 'Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the *Lamb for ever and ever*.'† It

* Rev. vii. 17. xxii. 1. † Jude 25; Rev. i. 5. v. 13.

hence appears, that it is part of the regal administration of Christ in glory to bear rule over the whole kingdom of redeemed saints. Nor is there any thing in this, incompatible with the dignity of their station, as exalted to the right hand of the majesty on high. They are still creatures, dependent creatures, whose very nature involves the idea of subjection. So far from its being derogatory to their exalted character to be subject to Messiah the Prince, it is their happiness to be placed under his mild and blissful reign. It is with ineffable delight that they bow before his throne, cast their crowns at his feet, and shout, in full and rapturous chorus, *Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!* What a glorious reign! A King infinitely wise, holy, powerful, beneficent, divine: an administration righteous, pure, gentle, and unspeakably happy: and subjects, all of whom can appreciate the excellencies of their Prince's character and the blessings of his administration, and among whose countless myriads there occurs not a single rebellious action, word, or wish! To do homage to their King is not only the delight, but the ceaseless occupation of the redeemed, and, without the perpetuity of his mediatorial dominion, there would be none to receive their ascriptions of praise, and gratitude, and honour, and glory.

On all these grounds, we may safely conclude that our Redeemer will never lay aside his mediatorial authority, never cease to act in the capacity of King of glory. Indeed all the mediatorial offices, would seem to be exercised in heaven;—the prophetical, in diffusing spiritual illumination; the sacerdotal, in securing the blessings and giving acceptance to the services of his saints; and the regal, in bearing rule, receiving homage, and administering reward to the children of the kingdom.

The preceding remarks may help us, in some degree, to form an idea of the nature of the mediatorial administration in glory. Let us lay aside, then, every prejudice that would prevent us from cordially rejoicing in a subject so delightful and animating. It cannot but be honouring to Christ to regard him as reigning for ever and ever; and it cannot but be pleasing, beyond all description, to his saints to think that they are never to lose sight of him as their King, never to cease to be his subjects, never but to yield him their grateful, heartfelt homage. It cannot but rejoice them to know that they are to be ever under his rule, and that, even after they

are taken to glory, they shall continue to behold him as the Lamb in the midst of the throne for ever and ever. What a prospect? How should it excite us to prepare for its being realized! Happy they who, having submitted themselves to him in time as King of saints, shall be eternally under his sway as King of glory!

CONCLUSION.

Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King! No language can more suitably express the state of emotion, which a proper review of the foregoing chapters would seem calculated to produce, in the breast of a saint. It is only a child of God, indeed, who can feel joyful at the contemplation of any view of the Saviour's character; but every such individual must find, in that which is here presented, abundant cause of grateful and complacent delight. The very place which the regal office of the Mediator holds in the economy of redemption; his glorious and divine qualifications; and the nature, extent, and perpetuity of his dominion, are all fitted to awaken this pious emotion. Authority is thus given to the messages of grace and salvation, by which dignity, force, and efficacy are so secured to them, that the messenger may well be hailed, in the language of entire satisfaction, 'How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good t'dings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!' The subject we have had under review, is well calculated, also, to furnish us with a criterion by which to test the character, both of churches and individuals. Professing Christian communities are deserving of esteem, in proportion as their principles and usages bring to light the mediatorial dominion of the Messiah; and persons are entitled to our regard, in proportion as they give evidence of taking pleasure in, and yielding obedience to, the Prince of life. How admirably fitted, too, to yield abundant consolation! Are the children of God in want? It cannot but rejoice them to know that the spiritual Joseph is ruler over

all the land, has under his management the store-houses of nature and grace, and is ready to satisfy every longing soul with ample supplies of wisdom, pardon, holiness, joy, and strength. 'Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month, and the floors shall be full of wheat, and the fats shall overflow with wine and oil.' Are they placed amid temptations and trials? No consideration, surely, can be more soothing, than that their Lord reigns, and has every circumstance that can occur, every enemy that can arise, completely under his control. 'God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble: therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake at the swelling thereof. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.' Are they led to anticipate a future world? Through faith in the Lord God omnipotent who reigneth, they may confide, in being safely preserved amid the conflict of the present state, being carried successfully forward to full and final victory over every foe, and being introduced at last into all the joys of a never-ending triumph. 'Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needle work: the virgins, her companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace. Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!'

Where joy in Messiah the Prince, on such grounds, is felt, the children of Zion can be at no loss to find sufficient opportunities of giving expression to their feelings. By contending for the honours of his regal character; by embracing every opportunity of talking of his qualifications, rights, and acts; by speaking to others, like loyal subjects, of the glory of their Prince; by endeavouring to diffuse correct sentiments, respecting his kingdom and reign,

among their friends and fellow-christians ; by standing up, in the midst of enemies, for his crown rights and royal prerogatives; by cherishing the memory, and imitating the example, of those who, in troublous times, contended earnestly for the regal honours of the Mediator, and, rather than forego one iota of his claims, took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, and magnanimously embraced the scaffold and the stake ; by cultivating an enlightened zeal for the extension of Messiah's visible kingdom in the world ; and, above all, by promptly submitting to his government, conscientiously observing his institutions, dutifully obeying his commands, and looking eagerly forward to being under his eternal reign in glory ;—by such means as these, has every one full opportunity of giving decided expression to his complacent and grateful delight in the mediatorial dominion of Messiah the Prince. Let us see to it, that we improve this opportunity. Nor let us be satisfied with any thing short of an entire and implicit surrender of our hearts to King Jesus. It is possible for the subject of an earthly monarch to make a fair show of loyalty, openly to profess allegiance, and loudly to shout attachment, and yet, all the while, to be treating with contempt the institutions of his country, living in daily disobedience to the laws of the land, and perhaps secretly plotting the overthrow of the throne. The subject in profession may be a rebel at heart. In like manner, if we are not complying with the requirements of the gospel ; if we are not having it as our study to believe and repent ; if we are not walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called ; if we are not living holy and obedient lives, in all godliness and honesty ; we are unequivocally saying with our actions, what we should perhaps shudder to pronounce with our lips, *We will not have this King to reign over us !* It is, alas! too common for men to show a willingness to be interested in Christ as a *Priest*, while they obstinately refuse to submit to him as a *King*. They would gladly be *saved* from a coming wrath, but they are utterly indisposed to *obey*. Let them know that these things are inseparable ; that the one cannot be had without the other ; and that such as will not accept of Christ in *all* his characters, shall never obtain an interest in him in *any*. If we are not the subjects, we are the enemies of this King ; and, if his subjects have reason to rejoice, his enemies have reason to tremble. *Thine arrows are sharp*

in the heart of the King's enemies. Let us reflect, whose authority it is we despise; whose institutions we contemn; whose laws we disobey. They are his, who has all power in heaven and in earth; who can break us with his rod of iron, and dash us in pieces like a potter's vessel; who can crush us in our impotent rebellion with one stroke of his power, and with one breath of his mouth can bid us away into never-ending ruin. 'He must reign till all his enemies be made his footstool. Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.' These are not empty threats. They are the words of him who cannot lie. They shall be fulfilled, to the awful dismay of all who refuse to submit to the sceptre of the Messiah. O thou benign Prince! enable us to escape this fearful doom. Put forth thine efficacious grace in our hearts. Make us a willing people in the day of thy power. And put us in circumstances, instead of the shriek of misery, to raise the celestial hymn of triumph, *Alleluia! salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God. Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!* We hail thee, Sovereign of our hearts; and, abjuring for ever all other lords who have had dominion over us, unequivocally declare, WE HAVE NO KING BUT JESUS!

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